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## **The Spirit of Post-war Russia**

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**SOVIET IDEOLOGY 1917-1946**

*By the same Author*

**RUSSIA AND HER WESTERN NEIGHBOURS**

(with Professor George W. Hecton)

*Cape 1942*

**SOVIET LEGAL THEORY**

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**FEDERALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

(International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction)

*Kegan Paul 1945*

RUDOLF SCHLESINGER

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*The Spirit of*

# *Post-war Russia*

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Soviet Ideology 1917-1946

LONDON

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## Preface

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THIS BOOK DEALS WITH Soviet attitudes to general issues of Soviet life, I should say it was concerned with Soviet ideologies, were that term not exposed to very current misunderstandings. The social relationships prevailing in every society are explained by groups whose professional function is to give such explanations. The political propagandist is one of a kind with artist, sociologist, priest, lawyer, etc., etc. To be sure, the picture they present of the basic assumptions of the society in which they live may be distorted by the need for self-assertion common to all social systems. It is possible to eliminate that element if the ideological statements, in the current sense of the word, are checked by those actions—legislation for example—by which the system expresses its real intentions, actions which are meaningless except as the expression of certain general attitudes. Such attitudes need not necessarily correspond to the actual facts and needs of a certain social system. They are ideological superstructures in the Marxist sense, but they are not necessarily ideologies according to the current meaning of the word. We have to deal with them when attempting to interpret the spirit of a certain social system.

I wrote the first draft of this book in the summer of 1942 when the Anglo Soviet Alliance had just been concluded, and I read the proofs four years later when it was undergoing a most serious crisis. The reader will find traces of the origin of this book not only in the fact that at many points I stopped at the pre war stage of development in the U S S R, but also by the attention devoted to such issues as the purges which naturally attracted a great deal of the observer's attention in pre war years\*, but now seem almost settled through historical experience. However, I do not know to what lengths the trends at present prevailing in English literature on the U S S R will go, and whether the sort of nonsense, restricted at the moment to the more popular publications, will need a reply in a book of this kind which is intended to appeal to the serious-minded public. The reader may feel that I have followed Soviet developments during the war merely from books and periodicals. This, I submit, is no worse an observation point than could be gained by short visits in Soviet trains and hotels which appear to have inspired other books on the U S S R. Wherever possible, however, I have spoken from my own observation in the U S S R before the war. This book was originally intended to deal with Russia's spirit on the eve of war, but I feel quite justified in altering the detail and calling it a book on the spirit of post war Russia, because I believe that the trends observable in pre war Russia have continued, and are

\*See my article in *Pacific Affairs* Spring 1939

continuing to dominate Soviet life. So it is possible to check the most recent facts by which they are asserted.

When I first wrote this book, I was confronted with two trends in the interpretation of the U S S R., each being represented by supporters as well as by opponents of Anglo-Soviet co-operation, according to the general political philosophy into which the respective interpretation of the U S S R. was fitted. Some tried to recognize 'everlasting Russia', with the October Revolution of 1917, as a mere episode, where others looked for the mere realization of an internationally valid Marxist scheme. I tried to write on the Russian Revolution, thus is to say on a certain fundamental stage in the history of a certain group of peoples conditioned and shaped by their specific development, but giving the first—and, in this regard, most important—expression to a need with which modern humanity is confronted everywhere, namely the transition from a capitalist to a socialist form of society. Were I not in some sympathy with the trend that tries to face that need, I would not have written this book, had I failed to appreciate as fully as possible the first mentioned aspect of the issue, I were no historian and sociologist but a propagandist of Utopia. No historical trend exists apart from its national realizations. Mutual understanding of different systems is an essential condition of collaboration, mutual criticism will be a most important contribution to general progress. But any discussion of the internal conditions and development of a revolutionary state can only be fruitful if it starts from the needs and standards of the state under consideration. Application of the standards of one system to the criticism of the other is bound to endanger not only understanding, but even co-operation. Study of the conditions of another country can never teach us whether certain standards are right or wrong, it can only show how they work. This supposes that we accept the basic foundations of any system as the starting point of our analysis, but it does not demand the application of its specific phraseology. On the contrary, we hope to demonstrate, in the present study, that it is possible to explain the basic lines of Soviet ideology in plain language, without using that special jargon which has very much contributed to misunderstandings.

I am indebted to Mrs. Joan Robinson and to Mr. Erwin Rothbarth (Erwin Rivers), who was killed in action during the last stage of World War II, for many valuable suggestions and criticisms that proved helpful even in those many cases when I could not agree with them and their criticism merely helped me better to formulate my point of view. Mrs. Myfanwy Rivers, Mr. Andrew Pearse, and others have thoroughly revised the style. To all of them my sincere thanks are due. The author alone is solely responsible for the views here expressed.

Lode, Cambridge

RUDOLF SCHLESINGER

July, 1946



## *The Main Stages of Soviet Development before the War*

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THE READER OF HALF a dozen books on Soviet questions may find himself confronted by half a dozen widely differing pictures of the same problem. Sometimes the difference will be due to a difference of judgement, the outcome of the diversity of outlook inevitable in the approach to any fundamental problem of contemporary history, but sometimes it will be found that the authors are dealing, without clearly stating their terms of reference, with different stages in the development of the Russian Revolution. Too often the writers themselves, not to mention their readers, are not aware that to speak of Soviet money or family or art as they were in 1936 is quite different from speaking of these 'same things' in 1920, '25, or '31.

Much of this confusion arises from an essential feature of the Russian revolution, in which it differs from its predecessors in seventeenth-century England and eighteenth-century France. No one would attempt to identify Cromwell with the Long Parliament, since it was he who dissolved it, nor the Napoleonic regime with the Directorate, nor the latter with the Jacobin dictatorship. In all these cases the different stages of the development of the revolution were characterized by violent changes of political constitution and of leaders, the new leaders were most anxious to dissociate themselves from their predecessors (though recent research has shown that all owed their main achievements to the foundations on which they built). In sharp contrast to this we find in Soviet Russia that one leading group (no doubt with some internal friction, purges, etc.) acting as an entity has wielded the political power of a revolutionary state for more than a quarter of a century. This leading group, the Party, based itself upon a distinct ideology. To obviate criticism by internal opponents of alleged lack of faithfulness in applying the original ideology to practical problems, the Party did its best to demonstrate its essential identity of outlook and even of political strategy during that whole quarter of a century.

To draw an analogy, let us for a moment imagine that the French Jacobins had been in power in 1820, and had finally, so far as there can be any finality in history, established themselves as the Russian Bolsheviks are established today, as leaders of a united nation. In such circumstances some of the consequences of the 9th Thermidor<sup>1</sup> and of the 18th Brumaire<sup>2</sup> to France and to the world would have been avoided, but there is no doubt that Robespierre or those of his disciples

<sup>1</sup>The downfall of the Jacobins in 1794

<sup>2</sup>Bonaparte's coup in 1799

who succeeded him would have taken many of the steps from which they were saved by the guillotine. Other steps would have been forced on them by logic inherent in the development of revolutionary France and by their position as undisputed national leaders. Such a regime would certainly have been much more progressive than the Directorate or the Empire, but nevertheless its leaders would have found very awkward to explain by formulae *à la* Rousseau and appeals to the spirit of 1792 and 1793 a regime that would have been separated by a quarter of a century of hard political experience from the Utopian days when Robespierre had offered his sacrifices to the Supreme Being.

Now Marxism, the dominating ideology of the Soviet state, has a great advantage in its dialectical character, its conscious flexibility according to changing circumstances. But one must not over estimate the practical use that can be made of this advantage in the everyday propaganda of a state where but 25 years ago the majority of the citizens were illiterate. In such circumstances the self assertion and the maintenance of the prestige of the dominant ideology are among its most important functions. It may be unreasonable to expect the leaders of the U.S.S.R. openly to declare that there has been a quite natural change, not only of policy, but even of dominating ideas since the days of 1917. So the public abroad is faced with two contradictory assertions: that of the (mainly Trotskyite) critics that the Soviet regime has abandoned its original aims and conceptions, has degenerated, and that of the regime itself which not only maintains that it has been true to these original conceptions, but in order to prove its case even tries to interpret its past in the light of its present. The custom of proving orthodoxy by quotations from classical writings was officially dropped by the Party only as late as 1939.<sup>2</sup> But the habit has become too firmly established in 40 years of factional strife to be overcome by a theoretical acknowledgement of the fallibility of classical Marxist teachings. So, for some time to come, critical observers abroad at least, are likely to continue to speak of Bolshevik Russia 'in general', without clearly distinguishing the various stages of its development.

Thus we have to introduce our study by a short survey of those stages and with a clear definition of the particular stage with the ideological outlook of which we are dealing. It is usual to divide the pre-war history of the Soviet Union into four periods. For our purposes in the present book it is sufficient to give a sketch of the first three, those that condition the spirit whose changes during the fourth period we are to study.

Generally, with some simplification, the first three and a half years of the Soviet revolution are spoken of as the period of 'War Communism'. The expression holds true, indeed, in so far as war, internal and external, and military needs dominated the whole period. The state controlled nearly everything within the range of its immediate power, i.e., within the towns and industrial centres not occupied by White armies or

foreign interventionists. This control was exercised on equalitarian principles, as are applied even by non Socialist states to make war-economies acceptable to the public. In Soviet Russia, during the Civil War, any small shoemaker's or merchant's shop was 'nationalized', and anything available was distributed on ration books. It was not much. Private interest in increased output being thus abolished the state appealed to the revolutionary enthusiasm of the citizens as the essential stimulus for all exertions necessary to win the war.

The war was won. So the Supreme Court of History will judge leniently all the nonsense spoken and written during these years in order to demonstrate that inevitable measures of war economy, such as ration books, were an essential element of Communist society, that the very intelligible inability of the state, during a revolutionary war, to order its finances, and the ensuing inflation were a highly desirable 'abolition of money-controlled economics and so on. As Lenin has stressed, this was nonsense from the Marxist point of view. War economics, however necessary to win even revolutionary wars, have nothing to do with any conceptions Socialist thinkers have evolved of a future Communist society—a society primarily based on freedom from want. But in order to understand the further development of the Russian revolution it is necessary to stress that War Communism and wholesale nationalization in the first revolutionary elan did not even correspond to the original ideas the Bolshevik party had hoped to realize in their day of victory.

'The very thing', Lenin had written on the eve of the October revolution,<sup>4</sup> will not so much be the confiscation of capitalist property as the establishment of universal, all embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. Confiscation will lead us nowhere, for it does not contain the element of organization, accounting, or correct distribution. Confiscation may easily be replaced by a fair tax provided only that we make it impossible to escape rendering returns, conceal the truth, or evade the Law'. This was the original Bolshevik conception of how to reorganize economics. It was a compromise, like most things Lenin proposed. (The only point where he did not make any compromises was on the question of who was to take political power and so dominate the spirit in which the compromises were to be executed.) The Russian capitalists<sup>5</sup> were invited to collaborate in building the new society. If and in so far as they would do so, they were promised good managerial salaries and a replacement of the 'expropriation of the expropriators' by the slow working of taxation. This period of transition would allow the former capitalists and their families to find their place within the intelligentsia of a new society without class privileges. The only difficulty was that the capitalists, and

<sup>4</sup>In *Can the Bolsheviks retain State Power?* Selected Works vol VI pp 267-8

<sup>5</sup>The relation to the foreign capitalists—the owners of most of the biggest enterprises in pre-1917 Russia—was of course, different. They were regarded as simply benefiting from semi-colonial exploitation of a backward country.

even the highly skilled intelligentsia, were, in 1917-18, not ready to accept the compromise. They answered the decrees checking the management by the control of Workers' Committees\* with wholesale sabotage. Thus they forced the state to attempt wholesale nationalization. In the absence of competent and reliable managerial staffs the Workers' Committees were made the essential organs of state control, certainly, at the beginning.

Consequently, not only some Russians, but even many sympathizers abroad began to think of Russian Socialism in syndicalist terms. Communism was identified with the control of a given enterprise by those employed in it, with some collaboration from the state. The employees were to share as equally as possible in the results of their common exertions. Such a conception might fit well into trade unionist tradition, but it was hardly compatible with the needs of a state struggling under the worst handicaps against internal and external foes. The Brest-Litovsk treaty was the greatest demonstration of the temporary weakness Russia had to endure after the Revolution. Immediately after, Lenin began his campaign for stronger discipline in the factories, for differentiation of wages and salaries according to individual exertions, for piece work, for employment of the former capitalists, managers and officers as well paid specialists, and so forth. During the second half of 1918, Soviet economics became as centralized and unequalitarian as was possible under war conditions. In 1919 victory began to crown the passing of the Revolution from the Utopian to the realistic stage, the latter only superficially veiled by the ideologies of 'War Communism' of which we have already spoken.

Victory over the Whites and temporary security from foreign intervention once achieved, the Bolsheviks did what the Jacobins in 1794, in a similar situation, had failed to do. The French peasants and middle classes, after Fleurus, had dropped the dictatorship as a temporarily necessary, but, in the long run, burdensome protection against a return, with foreign help, of the landlords. Lenin prevented the Russian peasants taking similar action, by dropping all the revolutionary policies and phraseology which had no justification beyond the necessities of war. Accordingly, in the spring of 1921, War Communism was replaced by the *New Economic Policy* (NEP), the second stage of the Soviet Revolution. The state abandoned, temporarily, the control of the little shop round the corner, and even of some of the larger business enterprises. Most important of all, it abandoned the control of the distribution of the surplus of the peasants' production apart from a certain 'tax in natura' which was to secure the most urgent needs of the industrial centres and of the army. Private enterprises were allowed to compete, under very restricted state supervision, with each other and with the big enterprises which the state kept in its own hands and conducted on essentially businesslike lines. The working population was to

\*There were no decrees on nationalization of industries amongst the—otherwise most important—decisions of the First Soviet Congress.

be protected against the evils of growing capitalism by strongly developed labour and general social legislation, by intensive trade-unionist activities and the like

It was this Russia, the Russia of the NEP, that the British Trade Unionist Delegation visited in 1925. It made a strong impression not only on them, but on progressive minds in the West in general. For it was still very near to the average Western progressive mentality. Its economics were run along easily comprehensible lines, with a larger number of factories in public ownership than any Western Socialist dared to dream of for another generation. This country, the most backward in Europe only ten years previously, now had the most progressive labour legislation. Even if there were some unemployment—and of course there was if the State itself had to close down its factories when working uneconomically—the treatment of the unemployed was more liberal than in any other country. There were the most powerful trade unions in the world, with an acknowledged share in the government of state owned factories, but also with the right to strike occasionally (especially, of course, in the privately owned factories). No judge or policeman interfered with such strikes. Last but not least there was quite a remarkable amount of freedom even of public political discussion. It is true, with a few recognized exceptions, this was restricted to the factions of the one ruling party, and the opinions discussed had to be expressed in a certain political jargon. But it does not much matter what a thing is called. Eager prophets might foretell the transformation of these factions into several parties representing within a virtually parliamentary régime, the interests of the various strata of the population. Certain ideological limits were set for the members of the ruling party but, apart from this, the Russia of the NEP was anything but a totalitarian state. Anyone who sincerely believed that the Tsar and the landlords had been dealt with according to their deserts and that the Church should deal only with spiritual affairs, enjoyed a quite remarkable freedom of expression.

Had the Revolution been able to stop short at this point the Bolsheviks would have achieved, with due modifications for twentieth-century conditions such as the nationalization of the big factories, banks, etc., what the Jacobins had attempted. Backward Russia would have become the most advanced democratic country in the sense of the French Revolution and of the Chartist Movement. In due course out of the well-to-do farmers, and successful merchants, a new middle class would have developed. The enthusiasts for the new state of affairs, like Bukharin, might hope that this class would 'automatically', by the progress of co-operation, 'grow into Socialism'. The more sceptical might call the same process a transformation of the Soviet Republic into an 'ordinary' liberal though doubtless a very progressive state with the most advanced social legislation, the most progressive schools and by far the most advanced nationality policies in the world. Doubtless it would have been worth the millions of victims fallen in the great

struggle. Russia, even so, would have entered the ranks of the leading nations of the world. He who dreamed of the former Socialist ideals might rest assured that the workers of the West as well as the colonial slaves of the East would have received a clear lesson that revolution does pay. Russia would have done her part—provided only she could stay where she was. But she could not.

Without capitalists, but with the most progressive labour legislation in the world, the state-owned factories worked better than they had done in private hands. Within a few years they reached and surpassed the pre-war level. But how, under these conditions of labour, could sufficient profits be made to build new factories at more than a very modest pace? The well-to-do peasants were highly satisfied with the freedom of trade. But they took it to mean that they were allowed to retain the bulk of the harvest until late in spring and then to use the shortness of supply as an instrument of pressure to extort economic and political concessions. The 'tax in natura' prevented the worst. But year by year spring was announced by a political crisis within the ruling party, caused essentially by the problem of what concessions to grant the kulaks (well-to-do farmers). And the richer they grew, the more they asked. In the spring of 1928 things came very near to a strike of supply. The state had to answer by measures that left nothing of the principle of free trade but the name. What would the peasants do in the case of war?

And war would come—maybe war against a united capitalist world. So the Russians thought, as anyone who was in their country then will admit, at least since 1927 when the Tory government followed Locarno with the rupture of Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations. This conviction of the responsible leaders of Russian policy decided the whole pace of subsequent events. I am, consciously, speaking merely of the pace. In no case could revolutionary Russia have allowed herself to be starved, or brought under political pressure, by the kulaks. And even the most modest aspirations for her future reconstruction needed a greater degree of industrialization than could be obtained without greater efforts. But a different pace in Soviet industrialization and collectivization, if it had been possible without risking the defeat of the Revolution, would have meant the whole difference between some additional economic exertion and the enormous price in human suffering and spiritual sacrifice that the Russian Revolution was to pay for its survival. Had external peace been secured, the grain stocks accumulated as a war reserve together with the normal activities of the tax-collector should have sufficed to bring the kulak to reason. In due course home-built or imported agricultural machines would have made it possible for the co-operative to throw him out of the market by 'peaceful' competition. And had it been possible freely to import foreign machines and to concentrate on building the factories necessary for a peaceful economic development, industrialization would hardly have cost the country more than the postponement of some otherwise desirable wage-increases or social

reforms. There would then have been no danger of dissent growing within the Party to such a degree that the 'outs' accused the 'ins' of betraying the Revolution, and that the 'ins' believed (and had moreover good reason to believe) that such propaganda by the 'outs' might bring about the downfall of the revolutionary regime. I doubt very much whether there is much chance of finding in *Moscow* the individuals responsible (in so far as individuals have some responsibility for great historical events) for the fact that tens of thousands of kulaks were to die in the northern forests, that the freedom of the churches was to be reduced to mere worship while all religious propaganda was forbidden, and that dissent within the Party on essentials of politics was to be regarded as a kind of treason. Whoever in Berlin, since 1918, was responsible for a policy that demanded Western capitalist support for defeating the German revolution, based on the promise that bourgeois Germany would form a bulwark of Western civilization against the Bolshevik danger, whoever in London, in the spring of 1927, was responsible for the Arcos raid, inevitably succeeded in convincing the Russians that they had, at any price, to prepare for war. You can, of course, accuse them of having partly been frightened by a nightmare, for neither Baldwin nor Chamberlain brought Britain into war against the U S S R. Nevertheless they made it possible for someone else to wage war against the U S S R, as well as against Britain. In view of recent events one can hardly deny the full justification of every sacrifice that enabled the U S S R, by industrialization and agricultural collectivization, to be prepared for the ordeal.

Full preparedness for an approaching war once given as a condition for the survival of revolutionary Russia, events had to take their course: what in fact was a second revolution (as the Russians now acknowledge) had become inevitable. If grain was to be collected by force from the kulak he was bound to sabotage production. The state, therefore, was bound not only to arrest the kulak, but to replace him, since the country could not exist without grain. The kulak was to be replaced by agricultural co-operatives which would, at first, be supported only by the poor peasants who immediately gained by the expropriation of the kulak. For the experiment had to be made before there was anything like a sufficient amount of agricultural machinery to make these co-operatives, the *kolkhozes*, a convincing success from the point of view of the average peasant. Lacking conviction that collectivization meant prosperity for him, the peasant, when induced to join the *kolkhozes* would, in most cases, previously slaughter his cattle. There would be shortage of food and rationing in the towns. The state would have to build a considerable number of factories which, by the very nature of armament production, were bound to devour a large part of the national income without at any time refunding the labour involved in their construction in the shape of goods increasing the national wealth. Another large group of factories in the heavy industries would make that contribution, by producing useful goods for peacetime industries, only many

years after their construction had devoured billions of roubles. Imports of foreign machinery would be necessary. These imports would not only have to replace the valuable consumption goods which could otherwise have been imported—to pay for them it would even be necessary to export some of the butter which the urban population needed. Certainly, during the first years, less rather than more food would be available. But millions of people would enter industry to build new factories, some under inconceivably hard conditions. These new millions of workers would have to share with the millions already employed in industry a rather limited supply of goods suitable for individual consumption.

In compensation for all their exertions the state could, in the beginning, give its citizens little but the conviction that they were building the material foundations of a new and better society. The state, therefore, had to oppose by every means those who denied the possibility of building, in contemporary Russia, such a society. The latter were bound, by their very convictions, to oppose with all available means what, in their eyes, must seem to be a senseless exploitation of the people by leaders who had betrayed the Revolution. What was growing in the Russia of the late 'twenties and early 'thirties was bound to appear, in the eyes of the opponents, to be merely a kind of state-capitalism which every class-conscious worker was bound to oppose by the usual methods of a radical labour movement. But a state which, in its very struggle for survival, was bound daily to do in a hundred places things that, under normal conditions, would undoubtedly justify the workers in calling a strike, was bound to consider as enemies of the Revolution people who spoke of 'state-capitalism' and, thus, were likely to organise strikes against socialist reconstruction. From the point of view of the opposition, Stalin's state was counter revolutionary, it was a specially dangerous kind of counter revolution because it was able to deceive the workers by revolutionary phraseology. Against such an adversary any method of struggle, including the preparation of armed force, seemed justified from the Trotskyist point of view. There are certain fundamental Communist views on the tactics to be applied once a reactionary state is confronted with external war. Karl Liebknecht had taught that it is in each Socialist's own country that he has to look for the enemy. For the Trotskyist the enemy was in Russia.

Thus all the tragedy of the later purges was made inevitable by the developments of 1929-33. Millions, many more than had participated in the battles of the Civil War, paid the heaviest sacrifices for what they believed the future of their people in 'peaceful' work in icy steppes or in the everyday struggle with the dark inheritance of the Russian village. But in the same fateful years thousands of people who had shared in the first struggle despairingly doubted whether it had been worth while to fight for such a future.

Much later on, when all was over, Stalin wrote a very characteristic passage, expressing something that, during those years, everyone



had known, but hardly anyone had dared to express openly. The collectivization of agriculture had been 'a profound revolution equivalent in its consequences to the revolution of October 1917'. The distinguishing feature of this revolution is that it was accomplished *from above*, on the initiative of the state, and directly *supported from below*—by the peasants participating in the anti kulak and collectivization movements.<sup>1</sup>

It is somewhat surprising that none, so far as I can remember, of the many writers on Russian problems has appreciated the whole importance in the evolution of Soviet ideology of this acknowledgement. 'Revolution from above' had, hitherto, not been exactly popular with Marxist opinion, including opinion in Russia. There is, of course, an enormous difference between a 'revolution from above' initiated by a state intent on securing and developing the achievements of the 'revolution from below' which had created it only ten years before and, on the other hand, that 'revolution from above' by which Bismarck took the wind out of the sails of the 1848 'revolutionaries from below'. And it is the latter instance that forms the basis of most Marxian opinion on 'revolution from above'. But the left wing everywhere is in the habit of glorifying the revolutionary initiative of the masses as distinct from state authority. During the great crisis, the Russians themselves were no exception to this rule, as anyone who has seen a film or read a Soviet book on the events of the First Five-Year Plan will confirm. The heroes are the workers of the factory who answer the cautious and hesitant plans of old fashioned specialists with 'counter plans' and succeed against all the handicaps imposed by red tape in realizing these plans, or the poor young peasants who against all the prejudices of their neighbours, including the local or district organs of the Party, succeed in building a flourishing kolkhoz. The leaders of party and state are kept rather in the background, directing the revolutionary efforts from below as Lenin had, from his hiding place, directed the exertions of the 1917 revolutionaries. Without undue violence to the facts one can, in either case, stress one side or the other of the picture—the role of the leaders or the role of the masses. When speaking, in 1938, of the 1928-33 revolution Stalin preferred to stress not only the role of the leaders, as the Bolsheviks had always done, but also particularly the fact that they had acted as leaders of the state, all achievements of the Revolution now at last firmly established were due to the state. Evidently the latter was not, as Lenin had thought all his life, the mere ephemeral instrument of the victorious working classes, destined to 'wither away' and to make room for a free community based on personal freedom and voluntary subordination to the will of the majority. Utopia had, in 1938, fallen back before reality. The Revolution was accomplished.

Just as during the first great crisis of the Revolution, in the period of 'War Communism', so also during the second, the rapid industrialization of the country and collectivization of agriculture, there were people

<sup>1</sup>*History of the C.P.S.U. Official English edition* Moscow, 1939 p. 305

who attempted to make a revolutionary programme out of the necessities of the bour. The leftist saw that the old specialists and the right wingers of the Party could not imagine Russia as a first-class industrial country and deemed it impossible to build huge modern factories out of almost nothing. The leftist had to fight such an attitude, therefore, to him, the giant scale of an economic project seemed in itself, independent of its economic merits, an achievement for Socialism. To build more and still more new giant factories came to be regarded as an essential element of future progress, as opposed to the capitalist countries where, during the great depression, harvests were being ploughed in and factory plants were being destroyed.

In the young and poor kollekhoses, enthusiasm had to replace economic rewards for increased exertions, and even in industry the stimulating effects of piece-work were problematic when the only part of the national income accessible to the worker was the minimum granted on the ration books. The most secure way of distributing extra food among the people doing heavy work, without risking the goods going on the black market to the highest bidder, was to organize canteens providing cheap meals in the factories. And the necessary condition for drawing young peasant women into industrial work or even into work in the kollekhos was to organize creches for their infants. All these things found sufficient justification in the facts of everyday life. But Soviet ideology during the First Five-Year Plan tended to build out of such natural facts of actual organization a conception of the coming socialist society without any private interests and private life at all. If possible even the pullets in the kollekhos had to be collectivized. Any personal care of the parents for their children was regarded as very nearly a reactionary prejudice. The community had to fill not only a very important part—as any Soviet people would agree—but nearly the whole, or at the least the central place in any citizen's mind, and the interest of the community had to replace such inferior stimuli as private interest. In fact, the Dnieper aggregate, Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk arose, out of the steppes, and 200,000 kollekhoses were organized, out of a semi illiterate peasantry, without the people who accomplished these things expecting any other reward than the consciousness of having helped to build a better life for the community. Such inspiration, in war as well as in revolution, is the great strength of the Soviet peoples. But could they be expected to build an efficient national economy for everyday purposes on such lines?

The responsible leaders of the Soviet state did not believe in ideologies as a sufficient basis for permanent social organization, nor in the permanent efficiency of mere enthusiasm as a stimulus for the average man and woman. One could not proceed indefinitely in the spirit of the First Five Year Plan. Besides, would it be worth while? The threat of war had stood behind the plan, and this spectre now put on flesh and blood. Whilst the new factories arose out of the steppes, in Germany Hitler drew nearer to the conquest of power. Half finished giants would be of little use in the hour of supreme danger, especially if they lacked

the necessary workers. You can, by the force of enthusiasm, get a minority to work overtime even in a snow storm to get a new factory built according to the plan. In a country like Russia such a minority may number some millions, and you will get your factories built. But you cannot by mere enthusiasm induce the average worker, freshly arrived from his village, to put forth the continuous effort essential in acquiring industrial skill, and not only to fulfil the plan, but to maintain, too, the quality of output. So one had somehow to stop the pace of 'assault'. What was needed was a normal economy and a normal society where work, generally speaking, was not building new factories but producing goods, and the reward for work was the power to buy a part of these goods in proportion to one's exertions.

Already in June 1931 Stalin had spoken of the necessity of working with, and duly rewarding, the old specialists who had formerly been considered as brakes on enthusiastic reconstruction, and also of increasing the average worker's interest in, and personal responsibility for, his work. After 1930 the agricultural Artel was accepted as the most suitable type of agricultural collectivization. As distinct from the agricultural Commune, which originally had been encouraged as the highest type of collectivization, the Artel leaves to its members a certain private economy, and even the right to sell the products of his private husbandry in the markets. In 1932, at last, the new tractor-building factories began to work. Now, collective agriculture could get a real technical advantage over the old methods easily understood by the average peasant. On 1 December, 1934, it became possible to abolish the rationing of bread. During 1935 the free market was restored for almost all goods, on a price level averaging between the prices the state had asked for the guaranteed ration minimum and those the customer had paid to the peasants for additional goods on the *kolkhos* market. Now increased wages or salaries meant proportionally increased purchasing power. The Stakhanovite movement was initiated. Now the workers were encouraged not only to make temporary exertions and occasional proposals for rationalization, but to achieve a permanent increase of skill and of output, in quantity as well as in quality.

These events mark the beginning of the *fourth* stage of post-revolutionary Russian development, and it is with the ideological trends of this period that we are to deal. For it is in the spirit of this period that revolutionary Russia entered the Second World War, the supreme test of her ability to survive and to develop. As compared with those preceding and following, the period we are to discuss was a period of respite, as had been intended. But it was an uneasy respite: the progress of economic recovery and of harvesting the fruits of past exertions corresponded almost exactly with the progress of imperialist aggression in the East as well as in the West, promoted by policies of appeasement. Therefore the period of economic respite never became a period of political respite, as had been intended by men like Kirov and as demonstrated at the Party congress in the summer of 1934 by the solemn

reconciliation with most of the former opposition leaders. Perhaps, political reconciliation—although not with oppositions within the Party—was still intended even at the beginning of 1936 when the new constitution was being drafted. But revolution and war have their own inherent logic. With Hitler *arte fortas* the hopes of the summer of 1934 were bound to remain mere illusions. A few days after the abolition of the bread ration cards, the decisive triumph of the new system, Kirov was assassinated. Doubts of the soundness of the 'Second Revolution', of the policies of the First Five-Year Plan and the structure established by it which had survived the initial success, were bound to revive as doubts about the ability of the country to resist the threatening onslaught, and as unauthorized attempts by malcontents who occupied high positions in the Foreign Service, to appease the aggressor even at the price of the highest concessions. Such factions might be expected to struggle for power in the hour of supreme national danger. It was the logic and the tragedy of the Russian revolution that the period of respite corresponded to the period of the purges. And the latter, too, threw their shadow on the ideological developments of pre-war Russia.

Before entering the immediate field of our investigation we have to cast a glance at the general structure of Soviet society in the middle 'thirties, after the final triumph of industrialization and agricultural collectivization, and after the town tradesman had been virtually eliminated.

## *The Classes in the New Society*

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### *(a) The Citizen under Planned Economy*

PERIODICALLY, FOREIGN OBSERVERS OF the U S S R have been inclined to expect a revival of what is called 'private initiative' to counterbalance the excesses of the previous period of increased collectivization. During the war, such prophecies were made even by some English and American writers who advocated the establishment of friendly relations between their countries and the U S S R, but were unable to imagine such relations between countries representing completely different social systems. At this point, we are interested not in their intentions, but in the facts allegedly supporting their argument.

The foreign capitalist expects the Soviet state, when it stresses the essential importance of personal interest as a stimulus for increased efforts, to acknowledge, too, the stimulating effect of private enterprise. Such an observer forgets that today, in every country, not only the bulk of manual work of all kinds, but even the direction of the most important enterprises is in the hands of people who cannot hope and do not even wish to become 'independent' owners. They work in the knowledge<sup>a</sup> that greater efforts mean larger earnings, or at least greater security of employment. The employee who is higher up knows that success in the service of his employer—in most cases an anonymous body—may mean promotion to a position of increased power, increased social prestige, and increased earnings. The present economic system of the U S S R., too, offers all these inducements to employees, governed by principles that are much more favourable from the employees' point of view. The lower ranks need fear no barriers to social promotion. Increased effort means not only a wireless set, a piano, and, when the country gets richer, a motor-car, as in capitalist countries. It may mean promotion to higher responsibilities than the man from the bench can hope to attain in any other country.<sup>b</sup> For the successful engineer or manager there are, indeed, no barriers at all.

The Soviet engineer, like his fellow in any capitalist country, may feel that the money he needs for realizing his projects is controlled by some other group of people who have to decide whether that money is available or not. But, from this point of view, it is more agreeable to be

<sup>a</sup>This is true, indeed, only for the higher employees. The average manual worker, the trade unionist in a capitalist country, knows that increased output may mean the risk of unemployment for himself or his comrades, and he acts on this conviction.

<sup>b</sup>We speak here of industrial, or generally professional, promotion. The way to functions of higher responsibility through active participation in the Labour Movement—in capitalist countries practically the only way open to the gifted adult worker—exists, of course, in the U S S R too, and in a rather higher degree than elsewhere.

dependent on the decisions of a body composed of engineers like himself, an agency of the state of which he is a passionately loyal citizen, rather than on the whims and private interests of some financial speculator. To hold office during the pleasure of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the U S S R may not be agreeable to one's *amour propre* but it will certainly be more agreeable than holding office during the pleasure of the administrative board of some joint stock company. The manager of a great capitalist enterprise in the West may, it is true, become a small or even moderate capitalist himself. But he knows very well what kind of 'independence' this means. In any case, it brings with it less social prestige and social power than winning one of the great prizes in Soviet life and becoming one of the leading specialists or professional men. To sum up, one can go so far as to say that the Soviet state can appeal even to the purely private interests and ambitions of its citizens with rather more hope of success than can any other country.

Such an appeal implies a certain degree of social inequality, and thus goes against the general standards of social justice originally accepted by the Soviet and shared by progressives abroad who were in sympathy with the U S S R because they believed that such standards would be upheld there. All ideological standards apart, social differentiation, however efficient as an incentive to increased efforts of the individual, may endanger the social and moral unity of the society applying it. The difficulties and the ensuing opposition are smaller in the U S S R than the progressive critic abroad might expect. In the U S S R there are virtually no unearned incomes. In consequence, the association of high income with 'parasitism', as current in the mentality of the 'class conscious' worker in capitalist countries, is lacking. Accordingly the Soviet state may be even bolder than others in using higher income as an incentive.

Nearly all labour is paid by results. The normal monthly wage (to be paid to the worker in fortnightly instalments) is based upon a certain average norm of output, and increased or decreased proportionally as the worker over fulfils, or does not fulfil this average 'norm'. In the case of over fulfilling exceeding a certain degree, the remuneration is increased even disproportionately to the work done. Thus 'progressive piece rate system' proceeds in geometric progression according to the degree to which the norm is 'over fulfilled'. Thus, a worker who has fulfilled, say, 140 per cent of the norm may easily earn double the normal wage for his occupation. If the low degree of skill of many 'average workers' is taken into account, such a position is not exceptional for the really skilled worker.<sup>10</sup> In consequence, earnings of six or even eight times the statutory minimum wage for unskilled workers are quite common. If, for propaganda purposes, one seeks out such cases there is no

<sup>10</sup>Extreme 'over fulfilling the norms', as for example the nowadays popular '1000 per cent men' is of course an indication either of mistakes in fixing the original norm, or of technical and organizational progress, due maybe to the worker's own initiative and proposals which are thus rewarded.

difficulty in finding Stakhanovists earning ten to fifteen times the minimum. Many a peasant worker fresh from the village might feel bitter against Stakhanovists, or even engage in sabotage against them, for, by over fulfilling the norms, they make it possible later to raise the norm (although, of course, not in the same degree) for the ordinary worker. This, indeed, happens nearly every year. The Western trade unionist will criticize such methods, which are incomprehensible from his point of view. The Soviet will reply that in the U S S R there is no danger of any worker becoming unemployed in consequence of increased output, and that there are no capitalists interested in creating a division between a privileged and an unprivileged section of the working class.

Among the intellectuals, too, the wage policy of the Soviet involves great differences in income. Here, too, if possible,<sup>11</sup> income is based on something analogous to payment by results, with prizes for extraordinary achievements. Such prizes may be given to the professor as well as to the factory manager and the engineers below him, as an acknowledgement of outstanding achievement—and also of long and faithful services of not outstanding but remarkable character. The expectation of more moderate premiums may form quite a legitimate part of the income which the successful engineer normally expects to earn, as do royalties on publications to most scientific workers.

On the whole the incomes of the most highly qualified specialists, on the eve of the war, were kept within reasonable limits. 2,000 roubles a month, or twice the earnings of a highly skilled but not exceptional worker, was the highest income normally to be expected by an intellectual working in any field. The normal wage of the Russian workers taken into consideration<sup>12</sup> this sum was comparable with something like £1,000 a year in this country. Half of this income—or, to express it the other way, twice the earnings of the average skilled worker—might be, for the physician as well as for the teacher, engineer, or officer, the normal reward to be expected, in due course, for simple industry and diligence, without extraordinary gifts or luck. On the other hand, it would, probably, be possible to count the people who regularly<sup>13</sup> earned more than 4,000 roubles a month on your fingers. Nearly all of them would turn out to be successful authors and artists. In extraordinary cases, as with the Papanin expedition to the North Pole, the State paid premiums of up to 50,000 roubles to the most outstanding

<sup>11</sup>E.g. in the case of teachers according to the number of lessons they give, as done in most other countries only with university lecturers.

<sup>12</sup>To compare the purchasing power of Soviet money with other currencies is extremely difficult and goes beyond the scope of this book. As the prices for various commodities if compared with those in leading Western capitalist countries, are very different a certain income in Soviet money, according to the way you like to spend it, corresponds to very different levels in England or even in Czechoslovakia. For example those interested in books or travelling may form a very different, and much more favourable opinion about Soviet price levels than those who like fashionable dress.

<sup>13</sup>We speak of course, not of the occasional income of the author who has just written a successful book, or the engineer who has made an invention.

participants Nobody, of course, expects to receive more than one such prize in his life, and it is the social prestige that counts rather than the material reward as such. There might be some successful authors with a six figure, or, to speak in sterling, nearly five figure banking account, this is the highest material (not necessarily the highest social) success any one could achieve in the U S S R. Prizes on the scale described are quite sufficient incentives in a country where—in peacetime, of course—the skilled worker can buy the best food that is available, where a four or five-roomed apartment and a first-class motor-car are quite extraordinary rewards to be granted by the state in recognition of quite extraordinary services, and where there are very few occasions for one's wife to wear evening dress. Regarded from the point of view of incentive to increased productive effort the system works at least as well as the very few big prizes capitalist society offers to some favourites of fortune, at the price of much less security for the diligent, and even the highly gifted, intellectual. In wartime, we heard of 'Soviet millionaires', but it is difficult to assess what this meant in terms of purchasing power of the rouble on the free market.

In consequence of the lack of unearned incomes the Russians are able to proclaim high income not only as the reward for increased effort, but as in itself a symbol of the higher social prestige which is the due of the most efficient worker for the common weal. This they do under circumstances inconceivable in any other country. In most countries during a war hard words are spoken—true, not by the soldiers themselves—of industrial workers who earned two or three times as much as their brothers at the front. The Soviet state, whose soldiers were exposed to rather greater dangers than those of any other state, not only gave high prizes to workers and technicians who had accomplished particularly efficient work in the 'moving of factories' to the East, but also published these awards, as a mark of the gratitude of society for the services which had been performed. The highest military awards carry with them material prizes, or, if granted posthumously, special increased pensions for the wife and children of the dead hero. Nobody finds such proceedings strange for the simple reason that, for many years, people have forgotten to associate high income with capitalist exploitation.

This does not mean that there have not been (and, probably, still are) many who deeply mistrust the policy of stimulating production by strongly differentiated incomes. The existence of such feelings is sufficiently proved by Stalin's repeated polemics against what he calls 'lower middle-class equalitarianism'. Nor is this surprising, after a revolution nourished in part by conceptions of the Western Labour movement, and in part by the undoubtedly egalitarian traditions of the Russian peasant in his fight against landlord and merchant. From the point of view of many Western sympathizers with the U S S R. the undoubted existence of social inequality is a current ground for criticism.

The differences within the Russian wage system (although not within Russian society which, it must never be forgotten, includes only earners



of wages and salaries) are rather greater than in most other countries. But they are hardly greater than might be expected, from the purely economic point of view, in a country where there is still a mass of absolutely unskilled labour together with a great shortage of skilled labour. Big inducements are necessary before the average peasant (or peasant turned worker) will overcome his traditional aversion to any systematic effort such as is necessary to acquire technical skill to face difficult examinations, etc. As long as there is anything like a labour market it is hardly possible to imagine a social system that, under Russian conditions, would not pay highly differentiated wages and salaries, as an inducement to the acquisition of technical skill, and the increase of production.

But in spite of their economic usefulness the question arises whether differentiated incomes will not tend to create new class divisions. Now, in the U S S R, the normal way in capitalist countries of creating such divisions is closed. There are some people in the U S S R with relatively large fortunes, some even with more than they can reasonably spend. But there is nothing for them to invest in but state loans. In the extreme cases of large fortunes mentioned above, the income from these investments might be sufficient to provide an unearned income for the owner's heirs, even after the payment of the inheritance tax. But no one would abandon his children to such a 'capitalist' future. He would most probably give them the best available preparation for a profession where the prestige of a famous name would be helpful to them, provided that they had at least some talent of their own. That is all. Neither a new capitalist class nor even a ruling class can grow up as long as the chances for the gifted boy or girl to rise 'from below' are not curtailed. Probably even the averagely successful intellectual will be able, as in other countries, to bequeath to his children, even if they are of only average talent, a position within the intelligentsia, while the worker's or peasant's child must have special gifts to enter it.<sup>14</sup> But if he has, he can and will do so, and once he has entered a profession the question of his position within this profession will not depend at all on the social position of his parents.

So there is hardly any possibility of a new capitalist class growing up in the U S S R, although the society that has developed is anything but egalitarian. Whatever can be said in favour of it, it certainly differs from the original conception of the Labour Movement, both Russian and Western. Stalin justifies the course taken by very strongly stressing the Marxist differentiation between the two stages of the society to come. The first, Socialism as it is generally called, is characterized by paying labour strictly according to the quantity and quality of the work done. In the extreme case 'he who does not work shall not eat'. This principle,

<sup>14</sup>The rulings, of September 1940, on the educational fees in the higher schools stress this point, as freedom from fees, and state stipends, are only to be granted to *otlichniki* (what may be translated 'an honours level'). The other pupils can continue to study only if they or their parents can pay fees on the usual continental level (i.e. much below that current in this country).

the theory says, will enable the Socialist society, as established at present in the U.S.S.R., to increase its output to such a degree, and to accomplish such a social education of its citizens, that a second, higher, stage will be achieved. Communism in the true sense of the word. Here everyone will contribute to social production according to his abilities, and consume what he needs. Later on<sup>15</sup> we shall have to notice that the second, the higher, stage may be interpreted in very different senses—here it is interesting only as the delimitation of the present one. According to Stalinist theory, the more thoroughly the special features of the present, Socialist, society are developed, particularly the sharp differentiation of wages according to the quantity and the quality of work done, the more quickly this society will move in the direction of the higher, Communist, society, where all these differentiations and inequalities will not be needed any more.

Evidently this argument involves the justification of the present stage of things by reference to something promised for the future. An argument which overstates the fact that there are some things in Russia today which are merely necessary evils, inevitable in the struggle for better things to come, is of questionable usefulness. Once Socialism and Communism are admitted to be two stages in the development of society the question of how to achieve the transition from the first to the second stage arises, especially if the first is deeply rooted, with a firmly established governing group and a strong executive. A cautious Trotskyist might, while accepting the thesis that it is possible to build Socialism in one country, add, that, even so, a second revolution may prove necessary for the transition to the next stage, Communism. In this form, although for a more remote future, he might revive the whole Trotskyist theory. In fact most criticisms of the present U.S.S.R. by disappointed Western left wingers can be reduced to an identification of Socialism with what the Russians call Communism. Such an identification is bound to result in ideological demands on the present U.S.S.R. which the latter, avowedly, cannot satisfy.

For the enthusiasm of the Red soldier, defending his country against a fascist, or even merely capitalist aggressor, it matters little whether he accepts his country as the highest imaginable achievement of mankind, or 'merely' as the most progressive state existing in the present world. So also the practical attitude of Western Socialists to the present U.S.S.R. should not depend on how her social structure is described in relation to further developments, once she is recognized as Socialist in our days. But propagandists like to put the best face on their propaganda. Therefore, Marx's saying that even Socialism is a stage of Communist society, albeit a lower stage, is energetically stressed in the U.S.S.R. This, in fact, does not change the character of present Soviet society. It merely brings the Communist ideal, as still preached in the U.S.S.R., nearer to her present structure, and deprives it of many features hitherto believed to be essentially connected with it. As we shall see, this is a

<sup>15</sup>See pp. 118 ff.

quite general tendency in modern Soviet ideology. The critic may interpret it as a dropping of the original ideal (or Utopia if he prefers that term)

Up to this point, all our argument has started from state-owned enterprises and has dealt with the Soviet citizens as if all of them were employees of the state. I assume the reader to be conscious of the fact that this was a mere abstraction. But it is legitimate, all the basic concepts of the new society are evolved in public enterprise, and thence applied to the other 'sectors' of Soviet economics. The formal question of ownership has caused much trouble to Western Socialists as well as to peasants (Russian and Western) who were afraid of nationalization, but it has always been a secondary question with the Bolsheviks. Lenin especially was entirely indifferent to Communist or capitalist dogmas about juridical ownership.<sup>16</sup> He was ready to make some concessions in regard to legal forms, provided only that state control was maintained and strengthened. In agriculture, co-operative methods of transition to the new society were obviously necessary for political reasons, and from the organizational viewpoint the state was well served by being saved the trouble of running a quarter of a million local agricultural undertakings, as had been attempted during War Communism. This proved a complete success in facilitating an increase of production as well as more efficient control by the state.

During the years immediately preceding the war the state transferred most of the land that the state farms had retained to *kolkhozes* either already in existence or newly founded. Thus the land hunger of the peasantry was satisfied, and the agricultural administration was improved and simplified, without any weakening of the effective control by the state of the land which it has previously possessed. There could be no greater mistake than to infer, from this episode, that there was any growth of a co-operative conception of socialism. Stalin loses no opportunity of stressing the fact that he considers state enterprise the higher type of socialist organization in agriculture as well as in industry. If co-operative shops appear to work less efficiently than they would under direct state control, the state takes them over without much regard for the theoretical rights of the members. This happened to the urban consumers' co-operatives in 1936. Nobody minded, for nobody looked at the matter from any point of view but that of obtaining as large a variety of goods as possible together with the most efficient service. Efficiency, and nothing but efficiency, matters. Small private property, including that of the remaining individual peasants, proved inefficient, besides making possible a black market. Therefore it was reduced to a minimum. Co-operative ownership works well, and is favoured in the villages in agriculture as well as in local village trade where there is a living collective to support it. Where there is no such collective the state does the job better itself, without intermediaries.

In Russia as elsewhere, co-operation may be considered from very

<sup>16</sup>See p. 11.

different points of view, depending on whether one stresses the help the individual member receives in his business, or the development of collective activities as such. The Soviet state permits no doubt that it encourages co-operative activities solely in so far as they promote collective activities. The kolkhozes certainly embody a compromise between individual and collective economics, but this compromise is being consciously modified in the desired direction. In sharp contrast to the industrial workers, the Russian kolkhozes peasants still have a personal interest in the market. Their 'home garden' has quite a different function in their lives from the plot that the Russian worker may own—or the allotment in which my wife and I were 'digging for victory' in this country. The Soviet state might call the peasant's garden, pullet and cow his 'auxiliary economy', merely intended to supplement the money and goods the peasant would earn by his main occupation, working in the co-operative fields and stalls. But the peasant—and more probably his wife—might, on the contrary, consider their participation in the work of the kolkhozes rather as an auxiliary to their private economy, to get bread for the family and food for the cattle, and the sale of the latter's products on the free kolkhozes market was regarded as the main source of money income. Such a conception, it is true, had economic foundations only in those kolkhozes which, in consequence of economic backwardness, were unable to distribute considerable money dividends. But even where the kolkhozes member lived mainly on his kolkhozes dividends, his traditional psychology was bound to emphasize the private husbandry. And even if the peasant thought of himself essentially as a member of the collective, this collective would hardly mean more than the accustomed village community, now reorganized as a kolkhozes.

For the industrial worker, employed in a state-owned factory, a certain professional qualification and, in view of the piece-work system, a certain efficiency in output, means a certain real income. So it does also for the small minority of the agricultural population employed on state farms, or in the state-owned Machine Tractor Stations which do the more mechanized kinds of work for the kolkhozes. It is an essential element of Soviet wage policy to keep this income identical throughout the country, apart from such differences as may temporarily seem desirable to encourage certain migrations of labour, and to influence youths in choosing their profession in the desired direction. In the official explanation of the new Five-Year-Plan for the period 1946-50 it is emphasized that exceptional hardship involved in certain kinds of work, such as in mines, at the furnaces and in oil production, should be considered in the differentiation of wages as well as the necessary degree of professional skill. However, there is an all national standard according to which the remuneration of different kinds of labour in nationalized industries is graded. It is different with the kolkhozes. For them, too, there are regulations governing piece work and different payment for work requiring different degrees of skill. But these regulations, for the kolkhozes member, merely mean that if he is working, as,

say, a tractor driver, and fulfilling just the norm fixed for the region, his share of the collective earnings will be twice that of an average worker in the same *kolkhos*, or a tractor-driver who has fulfilled only half the norm. There is no rule determining how much grain and money this share will mean in any *kolkhos* in the country that depends on the harvest, on the weather, and on many other factors besides the common exertions of the members. To a certain degree the state will interfere in the sense of equalizing the results of equal efforts. When fixing the amount of products to be delivered in exchange for the services of the state Machine Tractor Stations, and the prices to be paid for the other deliveries by the *kolkhoses*, the state will take into consideration the different fertility of the soil in different regions, and it will also grant relief in cases of very bad harvest due to natural catastrophes. But, generally speaking a working-day—or 'labour-unit'<sup>17</sup>—in the *kolkhos* of Nikolajevka is not expected to mean a quantity of grain and money identical with what a similar unit means in the neighbouring *kolkhos* of Martinovka: the state expects the peasants, if they are dissatisfied with a bad result, to learn how to tackle their affairs better from neighbouring and more successful *kolkhoses*.

From the peasant's point of view the reverse of this insecurity of income is the much stronger autonomy he enjoys in his community, compared with the state employed worker. This autonomy does not mean independence. The state not only controls the market for agricultural products, it also enforces a certain direction of collective economics by asking the *kolkhoses* to make their deliveries in certain kinds. The public investments made in order to further the collectivization of agriculture have not been free gifts to the *kolkhoses*. The supplied machinery is administered by state-owned Machine Tractor Stations which ask that the compensation for their services should be paid in certain goods which the state happens to need, and help the *kolkhoses* to establish the most suitable rotation of crops. In doing so the Stations take into account not only the interest of the *kolkhos* in earning as high a return as possible, but also, quite as much, the actual needs of state economics. The whole weight of the enormous influence exercised on collective agriculture by the state, especially in determining the relative prices of the various agricultural products, is aimed at turning the peasant towards progressive mechanization, and also towards the replacement of the traditional self-contained peasant economics by the production, and sale, of such industrial raw materials as the state may need, i.e. cotton, sugar-beet, oil seeds.

The result of all this should mean that the working and living conditions of the peasant become more and more dependent on planned state economy. But there remain, quite apart from the different ways of participating in the national output, strong differences between the position of worker and peasant within the administration of state

<sup>17</sup>For we have just seen that it is not bound to correspond to an actual day of work in the fields or stalls.

economies. The worker may, in 'production conferences', discuss the realization of the plan and also criticize the management, but the latter is appointed 'from above' and every worker and employee is bound to execute all orders of the manager, as long as the latter remains in office. But the peasant kolkhos members freely elect the men and women under whose immediate direction they work—however much their actions may depend on the decisions of the state-owned Machine-Tractor Station. The peasant, with his fellows, discusses the plan of work and the rotation of crops in a way quite different from that in which a production plan may be discussed in a factory. There is, in fact quite a lot of freedom for experiment—or for traditional conservatism—for a kolkhos whose members are willing to risk having to do some more work—or in the other case, to risk some part of the otherwise available value of the working day'. However the co-operative organization of agriculture may differ from that of state-owned enterprise, the predominance of co-operative production as opposed to private peasant enterprise in supplying the markets has been secured by the general trend of legislation, and the peasant's private husbandry has been restricted to what is its proper place from the Soviet viewpoint namely to improving the private standard of life of the peasant family. A decree of 27 May 1939 required a certain<sup>1</sup> minimum of participation in the collective work as a condition for continued membership in the kolkhos, while the circumstances, especially as regards taxation were made much less favourable for the individual peasant, and therefore for any peasant who might be expelled from the kolkhos. At the same time the extent of the kolkhos members' home-garden<sup>2</sup> and individual cattle-holding were strictly limited, and the kolkhoses more strongly urged to develop collective cattle-holding. Evidently the state felt strong enough to refuse to be content with kolkhos members who regarded their membership as a mere formal expedient to protect themselves against the higher taxation burdening the individual peasant or better still, hoped to get sufficient food supplies through the collective to develop a flourishing private cattle farm which was regarded as their main source of income.

The intention of the state is that eventually only the state or the collectives shall supply the market, and not the individual members of the collectives, the individual 'auxiliary holding' of the kolkhos-member and the share he gets in kind from the collective produce are intended only to supply his family with food for their own consumption. Thus the greater part of what the peasant draws from the collective earnings will be income in money, very like the earnings of the state-employed worker. Without this transfer of the main efforts of the peasantry to the collective fields and stalls it would have been impos-

<sup>1</sup>It is true it was not very high. 80 Labour units in the best-developed, 60 in the weaker grain producing and 100 in the cotton producing areas. The reader must not forget that especially in the case of skilled work a labour-unit might mean much less than an effective working-day. The average kolkhos member's family generally contributes something like 300 labour-units, the more active 600-800, and more.

able to apply modern labour-saving methods of production sufficiently intensively to allow of the mobilization of millions of peasants in time of war without precipitating a crisis in food supplies, especially if part of the food producing territories were lost. So, the reorganization of the *kolkhozes* in 1939-40 was an essential condition for the achievements of the Red Army.

There were reverses during the war—the losses in modern machinery, i.e. in the technical basis of collectivization, together with the need to supply the urban markets as well as possible from whatever source was available, stimulated some revival of private husbandry by *kolkhoz*-members not only for their private needs but also in order to sell the product. In a book that deals with the fundamental Soviet outlook we need not dwell on such ephemeral phenomena which are likely to be overcome by the time this book reaches the reader.

### (b) *Workers, Peasants and the Political Régime*

Since *Nep* man and kulak have gone, state employed workers and collectivized peasants are the only subjects of Soviet economic life. The social relations between them form the essential basis for the present political structure. We are not here concerned with the well known problem of the one party system from the democratic point of view,<sup>18</sup> we have, at this point, simply to discuss the social reasons for its origin, or rather for its preservation and strengthening a quarter of a century after the Revolution. Dictatorship of the most consistent of the revolutionary parties, after the others have failed to surmount the complicated tasks in moments of crisis, has been a common feature of every great revolution—the Russian no more than the English or French. In the last mentioned cases the dictatorship of the revolutionary party broke down after having fulfilled its essential tasks, when the classes that really profited from the Revolution felt the rule of the Puritans and the guillotine to be an unnecessary, and therefore intolerable burden. We have seen above<sup>19</sup> how the Bolsheviks avoided the same fate by executing the necessary turn themselves, and how, later on, they were forced to stabilize their achievements by bringing about another revolution this time from above. This meant centralized, one party dictatorship for another period. In the second as well as in the first revolution, success was the hardest test of the ability of the dictatorship to survive. In the Russian revolution, success means essentially the ability to keep the two main classes of the people together, that which at the eve of the war was still the numerically stronger—and that which, alone, has proved able to develop the forms in which social justice and national independence can be maintained in an industrial age.

In social position the *kolkhoz* peasant stands much nearer to the worker in the state owned factory than the individual peasant of the

<sup>18</sup>See p. 87

<sup>19</sup>See p. 12

middle 'twenties, with a kulak nucleus, did. But still there are wide differences, and differences of actual economic interest. The great transformation of agriculture can only be accomplished by the state reducing the individualist elements in the *kolkhozes* which the average peasant still estimates highly. The peasant will resent the fact, however inevitable in a country where agriculture still forms the largest industry, that the largest single item in the income of the state consists of the difference between the prices for agricultural goods paid by the state to the peasant, and those received by the state from the consumer. The peasant, further, is willing to do his part in the collective only on the condition that with an increase in money earnings he can buy an increasing amount of industrial products, especially textiles. He will resent shortage of textiles if caused by improvements in the conditions of the industrial workers beyond those possible for the peasant. Had the state been able to concentrate on peaceful reconstruction it would have been possible to increase the output of textiles without interfering with the workers' working conditions. But with Hitler at the door, no additional investments were available for textile industries. So the workers had to give more labour, and to sacrifice some benefits which were beyond the understanding of the peasantry, in order to increase the production not only of machines and armaments, but also of textiles. This was expressed, openly enough, in the Soviet press in the autumn of 1938, when the period of absence on full pay to which pregnant women were entitled was reduced from eight to six weeks before and after childbirth.

Should the reader think we are digressing from the one party system, he may reflect upon the way in which problems of this sort would be solved without that system. Suppose it were abolished in the U.S.S.R. in its present structure, and suppose this to be done even by the most gentle methods, say by allowing dissent within the ruling party gradually to develop into a virtual two-party system. At best, from the Soviet point of view<sup>21</sup> a two party system analogous (although on a different social basis) to that dominating the democratic phase of post-1918 Austrian development would arise. One party would represent the workers', and the other the peasants' sectional interests on a commonly agreed economic basis. Such parties might co-operate in defending the common achievements against counter revolutionaries, and especially against external enemies. But the *raison d'être* of such parties within a democratic system could only be the representation of their respective electors' economic and social interests. These interests were not opposed to each other in all possible circumstances. Conceivably, while each group acted in its own immediate sectional interest, the two

<sup>21</sup>There were, from this point of view, even worse imaginable forms of a two-party system, e.g. if one of the contending parties, by its very origins (e.g. in the case of the formation of a political ecclesiastical party, see below, p. 68) were likely not only to defend certain sectional interests within the system, but to oppose the system as such, not to speak of the probably Bonapartist forms which for example, the political opposition connected with the Tukhachevsky group would have taken had they not been suppressed.



might unite to oppose *some sacrifice the state might ask of both*. It was a combination of this character, a combination between representatives of peasant opposition against collectivization, such as Rykov and most of the non Russian nationalist right wingers, on the one hand, and trade unionists such as Tomskey on the other, that formed the foundation of the right wing opposition of 1928-32. Without a doubt, from the immediate, short term point of view that coalition represented the economic interests of a huge majority of the people. In parliamentary elections under a multi party system it should have had every chance of winning a majority. But today most critics will agree that, had Stalin not successfully opposed both sectional interests, the U S S R would have been unable to withstand the Hitlerite onslaught. Any case that could be made for electoral truce in this country can be made tenfold for the one party system in the U S S R for the whole period of reconstruction. For, inevitably, it is much easier to organize the collaboration of parties, opposing each other in everyday life for the defence of their country against an external enemy than for the achievement of a social transformation that is bound to alter beyond recognition the actual conditions of life of the majority of the electorate. This is not a case against democracy, nor even against a two (or more) party system as an instrument of democracy. It means, simply, that war and revolution, although they may be essential conditions for establishing or securing democracy, are not necessarily the ideal testing grounds for democracy in the current sense. Bearing this in mind, the case for the Stalinist system is very simple and convincing. It is not made more convincing by attempts to describe the U S S R as something it is not and cannot be.

Besides, in the social conditions actually obtaining in the U S S R, no conceivable two-party system could result in anything like working-class democracy. In 1935, three fifths of the total population were peasants. True, they were collectivized peasants, and they were merely three fifths while in 1927 they formed three quarters of the total population. But, in any case, they were the majority. This majority is the class that did not initiate the great revolution, and that, at each stage, needed a lead from another class. This other class, although it has doubled its specific weight during the last 15 years, and trebled its absolute numbers since the Revolution, is still a distinct minority. Whatever field of Soviet policy you examine, the specific weight of the peasant interest, since the collectivization, has increased. It has done so not because Stalin had, as the Trotskyists maintain, betrayed the workers, but simply because he has succeeded in collectivizing, and thereby organizing, the peasants. Three-fifths of a people organized and united have, politically, more weight than three-quarters isolated and divided among themselves by the strong antagonism between rich and poor. The Communist Party of the U S S R has succeeded in enforcing a process of economic development on those three fourths—now three-fifths—which only a minority of them had advocated at the beginning

This process corresponded to the ideals developed by the other class, even now a mere third of the population. For this essential success, the alternative to which would have been fascist dictatorship and colonial oppression, the price paid by the Russian working classes has been that the state has approached every matter, where compromise was possible, with a view to making the compromise favourable for the peasant. You see the peasants' will—through the medium of Stalin's 'dictatorial' acts—in the development of social policy. You can see it in the development of Soviet ideology which we are studying in the present book, and, further, you can see it also in Soviet foreign policy. It was to convince the peasant of the necessity of waging a war for the defence, and merely for the defence, of the fatherland that Stalin left Hitler the initiative and allowed him to enjoy the tactical advantages, and the moral burden, of opening a war that was bound to become a life and death struggle for both nations. I think those of my readers who know Russia—the old Russia as well as the new—will agree with me when I say that Stalin had very good reasons for paying that heavy price in the summer battles of 1941, for letting the aggressor have the initiative as well as the responsibility. Stalin acted reasonably when thinking of the peasant majority of the Russian people. The correctness of his interpretation of the feelings of the more backward strata of this people were proved when, in the midst of war, an official publication of the Orthodox Church<sup>22</sup> pointed out that no one has to look for the Cross and that to every man, and to every people would be attributed their proper share of suffering out of the evils existing in the world, but that out of the sufferings of the Russian people a better day for all humanity will arise. Stalin has created that national unity without which Socialist Russia could never have survived the war. He has shaped it by compromising with the peasants wherever it was possible without sacrificing the foundations of the new society.

How would parliamentary democracy, once established in Russia, have solved the problem? The Russian Social Revolutionaries aimed at the rule of a Peasant Party—but the record and outcome of the short-lived Samara Constituent Assembly, which gave way to Kolchak's dictatorship, have shown the probable outcome of such rule. In Bulgaria the regime of Stambolisky's Peasants' Party, even under conditions of peace, was overthrown by counter-revolutionary terror and White dictatorship, in Russia the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party was the only way to prevent a similar outcome of parliamentary constitutionalism in a backward peasant country. But, for a moment, let us suppose such a parliamentary system had been established say in consequence of a success of the right wing within the Russian Communist Party during the N E P period, and let us make the even more hypothetical assumption that it would have survived until the late 'thirties, without being overthrown by Bonapartist dictatorship—say of Tukhachevsky. Such a regime would have sacrificed some of the funda-

<sup>22</sup>See note 153 on p. 162

mental achievements of the Bolshevik revolution and thus would have been able to give the peasants more concessions than they were, in fact, to get from Stalin. But, in consequence of these concessions, that régime would have failed to achieve the necessary reconstruction of the Russian economic system, and thus to secure the defence of national independence. Russia, unless turned at that point into a Bonapartist dictatorship<sup>23</sup> and possibly even under such a dictatorship, would have become a colony with a highly oppressive internal régime. Her state-economic system, if preserved at all, would have been governed by the whims of the well-to-do section of the peasantry and, to a much higher degree, of the foreign overlords. The Russian peasants as well as the workers would have had to pay the price for this kind of 'democracy', which certainly would have granted no more actual freedom to the citizens than the Stalinist régime, in fact, was to do. It is not our task to discuss here the degree of democratic freedom which exists in Stalinist Russia, nor to debate whether, at some later stage when social homogeneity or at least a true balance of the social classes has been achieved, the present political régime will continue. No previous revolutionary dictatorship has survived the period necessary for establishing the new society and creating true national independence. This analogy should not necessarily be extended to the one party system in the U.S.S.R. The party system restored after the English civil war and after the French revolution was at least formally (though with changed social content) a continuation of the cleavage that had led to the Revolution, and it was backed by the balance of a society based upon competitive private enterprise. None of these conditions exists, or can be supposed to be restored, in the U.S.S.R., but we should keep in mind that competition of a number of political parties is only one of the forms in which a choice of alternatives may be presented to the body of politically active citizens. Whatever the future outlook of Soviet democracy, it will be based on the fact that the Bolshevik dictatorship succeeded in bringing workers and peasants of all the various nations together for a common cause, and for the defence of the only form of state in which these peoples could survive.

### (c) *The Soviet Intelligentsia*

So far we have spoken about the main classes of Soviet society whose interrelations govern the political life of the country. Now we come to the least numerous of all, the class that Stalin has called the 'Soviet intelligentsia'. This group, though its role is rather that of a medium expressing the feelings of other classes, plays an essential part in developing Soviet ideology, the subject of our study.

In a country which until 20 years ago was the most backward in

<sup>23</sup>The establishment of such a dictatorship would have been a very likely outcome of the first lost war—just as the failure of the French Directorate in external war resulted in the establishment of Bonaparte's dictatorship.

Europe, the intelligentsia, if defined by Western standards, would certainly not prove so large a social group as it appears to be from official Soviet pronouncements. Their numbers, as given by Molotov in 1937, is 9.6 millions. But this vast number includes the most varied groups. There is the intellectual in the Western sense, i.e., the man or woman with university or corresponding education, there are such groups as the teachers (nearly one million) who are of great importance for the intellectual life of the village, and there are people who in a Socialist society must do highly responsible work even if they have had little schooling, e.g., the 600,000 leading officials in the kollektives. But, besides all these groups which certainly play a leading part in the life of the nation, we find counted among the Soviet intelligentsia many people whom we in the West should count as average black-coat workers: the accountant (1.6 million in a huge country with a planned economy), the 'manager' (without assistants) of the village co-operative store, the medical sister who may still replace the doctor in many places and the 800,000 technicians and foremen in the factories. In itself it is a very interesting fact that such a broad interpretation of the 'Soviet intelligentsia' has been made at all.

Generally the intellectual is not very popular in modern revolutions. He justifies himself as a brainworker or something of the sort. So it was, originally, in the Russian Revolution and on this basis the Russian intellectual received whatever special material consideration for highly skilled labour was felt to be desirable. But, essentially, the position of the Soviet intelligentsia is a question not of money, but of social prestige, and largely of the position of the intellectuals of pre-revolutionary traditions. This latter group played a highly important part in very different strata of the intelligentsia—amongst the village teachers as well as amongst the members of the Academy of Science. And although, of course, the number of intellectuals of pre-revolutionary education steadily diminishes, the attitude to them and the traditions embodied by them is a decisive problem in determining the function of the new intelligentsia, grown partly out of their descendants, but mostly from former workers and peasants.

The pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, at that time liberal or Menshevik, had been the leaders during the century between the Decembrist revolt<sup>24</sup> and the 1917 revolution. But the Bolshevik revolution had to gain power in face of their opposition. It did not entirely displace them, after the collapse of the first attempts at sabotage most of them did highly important work and were also highly paid as 'specialists', enjoying a multiple of the maximum salary then allowed to party members. But the party member enjoyed the monopoly of political power. The young were asked to learn from the specialist, the professor of the 'old school', his techniques and abilities, but not his highly

<sup>24</sup>The insurrection of the young officers in December 1825, which can be regarded as the last of the army revolts that had characterized eighteenth-century or the first of the progressive movements that were to characterize nineteenth to twentieth-century Russia.

suspicious 'bourgeois' outlook. Still further to counteract his ideological influence the Party set up on various sectors of the 'cultural front' special organizations to defend the pure Marxist outlook, the 'Communist Academy' for philosophy and social science, the RAPP (Revolutionary Association of Proletarian Writers), and so forth. From the Party's point of view, such action was justified in a very different degree on the various 'sectors'. A Marxist party, just come to power in a country where no straightforward Marxist had been allowed to become a professor, could, as regards sociology or philosophy, either open the existing academy to its adherents by 'purging' it of its most famous scholars—a course the Bolsheviks firmly refused to follow—or build a competing academy of its own. There younger people of correct political views and very varied levels of scholarship might learn to compete with the scholars of the older generation. In retrospect, the reasons seem less convincing for organizing—by a party whose oldest members included a Maxim Gorki and many of the best writers of the younger generation—a special factional group on the 'literary front', instead of letting the younger generation simply compete, in learning and teaching, with the old. The results in both cases were quite distinct. Since 1934, all specific Communist organizations of intellectuals have been dissolved. When the Communist Academy united with the old Academy of Science it brought with it a number of members whom the most eminent of the older scholars had, all political considerations apart, to accept as their equals. Only relatively few theorists whose qualifications were political rather than scholarly had to be dropped. The RAPP, on the other hand, when liquidated and merged into the new wider 'Society of Soviet Writers', was mainly remembered as a source of factional struggle within the latter, and of sectarianism in the worst sense of the word.

During the battles of the Revolution a rather ascetic scale of social values had prevailed, and any violation of the equalitarian standards of life was disapproved by public opinion—in any case by the public opinion of those who supported the Revolution. But the leading principle of the Russia of the middle 'thirties was 'payment according to quantity and quality of the work done'. He who earned more and who, therefore, had more to spend now felt himself encouraged in his standard of living. Provided it was, according to general standards, a 'cultural' one, a higher standard of life would be accepted by public opinion as the expression of a larger contribution made to national wealth. The Party member who directed the factories, the armies, the Civil Service, now ceased to regard it as a symptom of 'bourgeois degeneration' to draw a higher salary than a skilled worker—and the non party intellectual had no reason to be more ascetic. In the new hierarchy, professional skill, amount of income, and social prestige were regarded as corresponding elements.

Once the decisive battles of the 'second revolution' had been won, a conscious effort was made to merge the old intelligentsia with the new

The survivors of the old had learned much, above all, that only as a Soviet state could their beloved Russia survive. And the younger ones had learned something, too—first of all that to be a revolutionary does not necessarily mean to believe that the day of the Revolution was the day of the Creation and all the achievements of the past are mere scrap. So the social barriers fell, too: the old academician with his son or daughter, the secondary school teacher or doctor in the provincial town, were recognized as members of one of the most important sections of the nation. On the other hand, his Communist fellow-academician began to feel a certain pride at being recognized as a successor of the greatest authorities of pre-revolutionary Russia, and showed less zeal to reject *a priori* everything connected with pre-revolutionary Russia.

A decreasing interest in political theory as such, and an increasing social weight for professional qualifications is, indeed, a natural result of the transition from the revolutionary upheaval to long-term reconstruction. The Trotskyist laments over the downfall of the 'old Bolsheviks'—or rather of the various factions that strove amongst themselves for the prestige of Marxist orthodoxy. In fact, he is regretting the after-effects of the victorious revolution, painful as these effects may be for the people concerned. If, in 1917 or 1919, Kornilov, Kolchak or Denikin had proved victorious, revolutionary politics would have remained the main interest of Russian intellectual life for some further decades to come, and the professional revolutionary would have remained the ideal type of the Russian intelligentsia. He would also have been needed, for without a thorough revolution Russia could not survive amongst the leading nations of the world. But as the Whites and the powers behind them were defeated, the generation which had done its work had to go. The country now needed people who understood how to harvest and to defend the fruits of the victorious revolution. So the hour was bound to come when, in 1936, Stalin appealed to the 'Bolsheviks without a party-card'. Nor was it chance that he used the term for the first time when addressing young army officers. As in the similar stages of all great revolutions, it was not difficult for the representatives of the revolutionary past to find subjectively convincing reasons, in revolutionary ideology, to prove that the men who had taken upon themselves the enormous responsibility of preserving the practical achievements of the Revolution had betrayed its ideals. History will probably speak of some of these men in different terms from those employed by Stalin and his attorney, Vishinsky, during the trials. But I very much doubt whether, in 20 or 30 years, there will be any dissent among serious critics as to who was, historically, right.

The 'Bolshevik without party-card' was a contradiction in itself, proving simply that during 20 years the words had lost their original meaning. A Bolshevik, in the word's true meaning, was originally a man or woman who was not only a member of the Social Democratic Party but who belonged to a certain group, the majority (*bolshinstvo*) within the Party. He was 'Bolshevik' for the very reason that he was not only a

Socialist in his general convictions but a strict partisan in the sense of being highly interested in the details of Marxist theory and tactics. In 1931 Stalin was still addressing Party members who were Bolsheviks in this sense when he called for the 'conquest of technique' as the means of eliminating reliance on the *bourgeois* specialists with all their doubts about the policy of the First Five-Year Plan, and the danger of sabotage that dependence on them involved. But, in 1937, during the 'purges', Stalin called for 'the conquest of Bolshevism' and its political theory—of course in a sense to be elucidated now by the Party leaders.<sup>25</sup> The reason Stalin gave for this slogan was that those who were politically active had mastered industrial technique and had succeeded in amalgamating the old and the new intelligentsia, but had neglected political theory. Consequently they had become, or remained dependent on people who had no technical knowledge, but some mastery of the political jargon—in short, the defeated factions and that stage in the development of Soviet political theory for which these factions had stood. But the points which interest us here is *to whom* such an appeal could be addressed at all. Evidently Stalin was talking to people who had not grown up in Marxist theories but had been hitherto merely interested in technical progress, absorbed in everyday work—too exclusively absorbed, as Stalin thought, to be able to play their part in leading the country. They were people who had risen during the Five-Year Plans to positions of responsibility, without finding time for their Marxist schooling—and they were also people who had sided with the Party during those years, though they had received a schooling opposed to Marxism in earlier days. This was the new elite that replaced the 'old Bolsheviks' and their terminology.

How did things look to the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia and their children, who even in the 'thirties, still formed a large part of the best qualified Soviet intellectuals? Since the early 'thirties, material conditions had much improved for the bulk of the intelligentsia, the average doctor or teacher, whose standard of living was then rather lower than that of the skilled worker.<sup>26</sup> The technical specialists, however, have always enjoyed considerable privileges and relatively comfortable standards of living, considering the country's restricted means. Similarly, famous professors or artists who were non-party members<sup>27</sup> could expect little further material improvement from the recent

<sup>25</sup>The official document of this new interpretation and, therefore, a main source for any student of the subject, is the *History of the CPSU (Bolsheviks)* (English edition, Moscow, 1939), evidently under the personal editorship of Stalin.

<sup>26</sup>The case was especially gross in the case of doctors—with the result that most of those entering the profession were women while men were much more attracted by industry. The position of the village teachers was certainly not better. But it must be kept in mind that when, in 1936, the U.S.S.R. radically improved their position she did something hitherto unattempted in any Eastern European country.

<sup>27</sup>The maximum earnings of the Party members had before 1936 been restricted to an amount in theory corresponding to the maximum wages of a skilled worker. Of course there had been even before 1936, various ways of securing the Party member intellectual, by way of holidays, housing conditions, etc., standards of living not too far below those of an equally efficient fellow professor who did not belong to the Party.

changes. What did matter to them was the removal of the social stigma which was still attached to the intelligentsia as long as the Party members, i.e. the politically and ideologically most influential group, regarded them with reserve, if not suspicion. Already in 1934 all the regulations were dropped which had restricted the educational rights of the sons of the former aristocrats and capitalists. Whatever might be the political power implied in the Soviet citizen's suffrage, the fact that, in 1936, it was made equal for all citizens implied equality of social status for those who formerly had been deprived of it. The slogan 'Bolsheviks without party-cards' was meant to put an end to the reservations of the Party members towards the old intelligentsia, and to carry still further the fusion of Party and of non party intellectuals into one homogeneous body united by a general allegiance to the Soviet fatherland. In 1939 all the regulations making it more difficult for the intellectual to join the Party than it was for the worker or peasant were repealed. Excessive regard was no longer paid to details of dogma, and certain professional standards were set, the maintenance of which was regarded as a major task of Soviet policy.

The day had passed when the 'professional revolutionary' did any kind of work to which the Party directed him, substituting for professional knowledge at best common sense and an understanding of the essential needs of the country, at worst orthodox phraseology. In the middle 'thirties this type of non specialist Communist administrator had nearly disappeared. Even the worker or peasant who began his studies for some kind of intellectual work in advanced years and equipped himself by adult education only, had become rather the exception. The typical intellectual now was a young man or woman who chose some profession for life, generally immediately on leaving the secondary school,<sup>22</sup> and found his or her vocation in rising gradually within this profession to a higher degree of professional efficiency and to a position of higher social importance. Since 1935 the state has tried to regulate this rise systematically. Minimum standards have been set for its different stages by the introduction of professional degrees to be acquired by the process of 'attestation' and to be lost only by judgement of the Courts. At first, a system of ranks with corresponding titles<sup>23</sup> was set up in the Army and Navy as a means of strengthening the sense of professional responsibility, and to emphasize the importance of technical and theoretical studies. In 1936 teachers and scientific workers followed suit. The introduction of 'permanent professional titles' based on attestation for a profession was generally accompanied by a regulation defining

<sup>22</sup>The abolition, in 1934, of limitations on the admission of students to the universities according to their social standing involved the abolition of the practice of students of middle-class origin spending one or two years in a factory prior to admission to the University, a practice perhaps not undesirable from another point of view.

<sup>23</sup>The original descriptions of ranks in the Red Army had been simple designations of the respective function—say 'Company-commander', or 'Corps-commander'. They were automatically implied by someone's occupying the respective, or a comparable, function. Especially in the Political Commissariat it might, thus, easily happen that someone occupied very high rank in the Army without technical preparation.



salaries higher than those previously paid. Thus the social and material conditions of a profession were improved while simultaneously increased demands on its efficiency were enforced. No doubt, this also rendered the professions more difficult of access for people without regular university preparation, unless they had either exceptionally high individual achievements to base their claims upon, or a particular gift for passing examinations in advanced years.

While the standard of entry to the professions was raised and, thus, the average worker's chance of entering them decreased, there grew up a natural tendency to emphasize and to develop chances of professional promotion that were open to everyone who showed ordinary interest, capacity, and diligence in his work. This was intended to supply the marked lack of non-commissioned officers<sup>20</sup> in industry as well as in the Army. This deficiency, one of the most serious handicaps of post-revolutionary Russia, is in part the inevitable consequence of the rapid development, within less than 10 years, of industry in a previously mainly agricultural country. In part it is an inevitable consequence of any revolution. In revolutionary times those of the non-commissioned officers in the Army, foremen in the factories and people of similar standing in other walks of life who are in sympathy with the movement will naturally take the place of the former commanders and specialists who were for the most part opposed to the revolution. On the other hand there will be little chance to replace them. The function of the man immediately commanding soldiers or workers, strongly connected as it is with the maintenance of discipline, will be much less popular than constructive intellectual work with the revolutionaries who are naturally opposed to the old discipline. The role of the engineer stimulates the imagination of the worker who has some interest in his work and, if he is gifted and the revolution has removed social barriers, his ambitions as well. It is different with the foreman. As a natural consequence of the revolution the immediately productive worker will feel that he is more important than the foreman, who is suspect as a representative of the discipline formerly exercised on behalf of the employer and who has not the superior knowledge which the worker respects in an engineer who knows his job. The Soviet system of 'progressive piece rates'<sup>21</sup> and the social prestige granted to the 'Stakhanovist' worker who permanently 'overfulfils his norm' made the worker even less inclined to exchange his

<sup>20</sup>Of course the term is used, in industry only by analogy. There is in industry not such a clear distinction as regards the professional preparation of the lower and higher ranks: the young engineer after having left college, begins his practical career as an assistant foreman, and workers who have become foremen are often promoted further, *in the purely administrative field* without undergoing a special academic course. Also in the Red Army the professional non-commissioned officer expects even in peacetime normally to end his career in commissioned rank. But if his aspirations go, say, beyond the rank of captain he must undergo academic training, not always easy in advanced years. In the factory workers, especially if they have gained (say in Trade Union work) much experience of organization, can rise to very high managerial functions even without academic training. During the purges such promotions happened very frequently.

<sup>21</sup>See p. 22

position for that of a foreman, even if the earnings were a little higher than those of the average skilled worker, as was generally the case.

During the period immediately before the war the increased stress on discipline and the increased demands made on the qualified specialist resulted in increased emphasis being laid on the importance of the non-commissioned and lower commissioned ranks in the Army and the corresponding positions in industry. Soviet propaganda no longer emphasized the Field Marshal's baton in every soldier's knapsack', that is, after all, an ambition realizable by only a very small minority. Instead, stress was laid on the soldier who, after his obligatory term of service, chose the career of professional non-commissioned officer with a good chance of promotion to lower commissioned rank even in peacetime, or on the foreman, responsible for and materially interested in the fulfilment of his workshop's plan. A very characteristic symptom of the new policy was the September decree of 1940.<sup>22</sup> This decree, doubtless, reduced the average working-class lad's chances of achieving a university education and attaining a professional career of his choice. But at the same time it made provision for technical secondary education all over the country—to be enforced compulsorily if necessary (as it has not been)—and thus granted everybody free access to the career of a skilled worker. This career does not stop at the rank of foreman as is usual in other countries. The very shortage of skilled labour that enforced technical at the expense of university education also demands encouragement of higher technical education. Universities and most of the institutes preparing for non-technical professions demand fees from the average student, and offer stipendia only to the *elitshniki*. But perusal of the announcements in Soviet newspapers during the War shows that the technical institutes preparing engineers for the most diverse industries offer stipendia and satisfactory conditions of life to anyone who can pass the entrance-examination or has a higher school certificate. Thus it may be said that the recent changes in Soviet education have reduced the free access to all professions, except for the exceptionally gifted, but have increased the opportunities of technical education and industrial promotion generally within that industry where the worker happened to start.

The foreign sympathizer with the original Soviet achievements may judge such policies critically. But it is by no means certain that they have been so judged within the U.S.S.R. itself. There, the point of view is entirely different. We, abroad (including those who have had an opportunity of personally seeing the best achievements of Soviet reconstruction) are used to measuring by standards developed by progressive Western opinion which the Russian Revolution accepted and tried to realize, though it succeeded in doing so only for an active minority of the Soviet citizens. In so doing we are inclined to forget how small this minority has been. During the first wave of the Revolution it consisted of a few million people—the cadres of the industrial workers and a very

<sup>22</sup>See note 14, p. 25

small, but active minority of the peasants. During the 'second revolution', undoubtedly, a few dozen millions were actively participating in building new factories and in collectivizing agriculture. But even a few dozen millions are a minority in a country with 170 million inhabitants. It was only during the *economic recovery in the middle 'thirties* that the bulk of these millions realized the progress made. Naturally they measured it by the standards of their own past—not by the standards and aspirations of the active minority of the first years. Part of this minority and most foreign observers who were in sympathy with the Revolution are inclined to do this. Perhaps the simplest description of the social content of the internal policies of Stalinism would be to say that it has brought 'down the revolutionary achievements to a level where they can be understood, accepted and defended by all those who, originally, stood aside—whether intellectuals or peasants.

The level of the achievements may have been somewhat lowered—but they have been much widened and they are attainable for a much larger part of the people than at any previous time. Certainly, advanced educational experiments in some advanced schools in the capitals have been dropped in favour of a rather old fashioned system of teaching and school discipline. But, on the other hand, there is no longer any illiteracy, and there are no longer any towns, and few agricultural districts, which lack facilities for full secondary education. Followers of more advanced artistic schools may regret the fact that much of the attention formerly devoted to furthering the modern art of their liking is now being devoted to teaching the people Pushkin, Tolstoy, and the other classics. But the modern writers can hardly claim to have produced anything as suitable for introducing young people or the average peasant to the spirit of Russian literature as, for example, *The Captain's Daughter*, *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*—or, if greater demands from the point of view of socialist ideology are made—Gorky's *Mother*. The chances for the average working class boy to study at a university may have diminished somewhat. But there is no longer any boy or girl in Russia who is debarred from becoming a skilled worker, and hardly anyone with special gifts who is debarred from studying at a university. Stalinist Russia may not yet have achieved the highest imaginable social progress—but she has achieved something 200 million people can easily understand—a country and a system worth dying for.

(d) *Which is the Leading Stratum in the U S S R ?*

Is there a ruling class in the U S S R ? In the framework of Marxist theory, which defines class in terms of a group's relation to the means of production, the answer is obviously, no. Unless, in contradiction to the most obvious facts, the peasants are to be described as a privileged and ruling class because part<sup>22</sup> of the means of production used by them is

<sup>22</sup>As distinct from that other part that has been supplied by the state and is administered by its Machine Tractor Stations. See p. 29.

owned, not by the state, but by their co-operatives, all Soviet citizens are evidently equal in that they do not privately own means of production but depend on earned income, all the forms of which are at least comparable with wages. On the other hand, all of them, in theory, share in the ownership of the means of production, administered by a community of which they are members and whose decisions they can influence in some way or other. What actually matters is to define that way: the U S S R is not the only country in the world which describes her constitution as the most democratic of all, and in every case there are different links (to be discussed in a later chapter) between the constitutional statements on the citizen's right to participate in the formation of the will of the community and those social processes that actually allow the citizen's will to influence the decisions of those who act on his behalf.

It is further evident that in the U S S R, as in any other country with modern large-scale industry, factories are administered, on the owner's behalf, by technical experts who are called managers in the U S S R as much as in any capitalist country where factories have grown too large to be administered by the owners themselves. This rather elementary fact has given rise to a fashionable theory, according to which managers are the ruling class in modern society. In consequence, there should be no fundamental difference between the U S S R and a capitalist country whose industries have grown beyond the middle entrepreneur's control. However agreeable this theory may be from some people's political standpoint, I can hardly find rational sense in it unless it could be shown (a) that managers, in the U S S R, form a compact social group administering the enterprises put under their control virtually without interference by other people, that is to say, that they are able either to nominate the leaders of the C P, or to restrict the latter's influence on management, (b) that the managerial class forms a stable social entity in the sense that a manager's son, as a rule, becomes a manager himself, and that newcomers from other social strata (including other parts of the intelligentsia) are as exceptional as the famous ex newsboy millionaire of the U S A. As long as the supporters of the 'managerial theory' fail to prove the prevalence of those two fundamental conditions, I cannot take their thesis seriously.

But obviously there are economic differentiations, and there are certain leading groups within Soviet society. How may those groups be characterized?

The less informed part of the public abroad thinks at once of the Party, dominating a virtually totalitarian state. The *politically* leading role of the Communist Party is an indisputable fact, legally acknowledged in the 1936 constitution. But this does not mean that the Party is in any way the socially dominant group within Soviet society. For the average worker and peasant, in Russia as elsewhere, the main way towards achieving political and social influence is through participation in the Labour movement. Activity in the Trades Unions too is likely to

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involve, at a certain stage, joining the Communist Party. For the intellectual, however, joining the Party is only one of various ways to social influence and probably not the most efficient, at least since 1934. An intellectual, if politically ambitious, might find the Party card useful at a certain point in his career. But a man who staked his professional career on political orthodoxy rather than on professional qualifications might easily find at the next turn of the political 'general line' that what he believed to be orthodoxy was rather a handicap, and a source of eventual 'deviations'. Even if he had not taken sufficient part in factional strife to become a victim of a 'purge' he would risk a professional setback which might discriminate against him in favour of 'non political' competitors who, while professing their loyalty to the new state, had concentrated their energies on purely professional accomplishments outside the purview of the politicians. The role of the Party is enormous, but the influence, and especially the permanence of the political position of its individual members is precarious.

It is an amazing sociological phenomenon that even among non-Socialist critics 'bureaucracy' has become the most general term for denoting the new leading groups of the Soviet state. Evidently this is because criticism abroad has mainly been nourished by dissenting factions within the Russian and international labour movement. In spite of all Lenin's<sup>34</sup> theories about the leading rôle of the 'professional revolutionary' independent of his social origin, non working-class leaders are objects of suspicion to the average radical worker. Leaders of working class origin are also suspect once they are transferred from the work bench to some trade union or party, not to speak of state, office. This phenomenon is well known to the student of the sociology of any radical or Socialist movement. It explains why the Trotskyist opposition—whose main strength, besides, was in the younger generation of the Party-intelligentsia—has, since 1923, appealed against the 'bureaucrats' using just the same arguments which in any Western labour movement the 'outs' would use against the 'ins'. Together with the well-known bias of many foreign observers against the U.S.S.R. this fact may explain, sociologically, why the term has become so popular. But it seems, to me at least, simply impossible to find any correspondence of Soviet reality to it—apart from the truism that, in any political system, the directors of the various political and social activities work in offices. Hardly anywhere is the 'bureaucrat' in the true sense—the hardened Civil Servant—less popular than in the U.S.S.R., and the social prestige, heaped on the heads of the Soviet intelligentsia during recent years, has in a very remarkable way passed him over.

The explanation for this is simple: in the U.S.S.R., as in most continental countries, the bureaucrat is the one specialist of whom there is no lack. The traditions of continental enlightened absolutism and bureaucratic rule have created, especially among the lower middle

<sup>34</sup>They were most clearly elaborated in 1903 in *What To Do Now* and, for this reason, can hardly be called a 'Stalinist degeneration'.

classes, a tendency to seek for their descendents a not very opulent but safe path to social 'importance'. A Socialist revolution, with the enormous growth of state activities involved, was not the occasion for the disappearance of these tendencies, nor of 'bureaucratism' in the worst sense of the word. But just for this reason, the bureaucratic, as distinct from the practical, approach to things, and the bureaucrat, as distinct from the technical, scientific, or military specialist is the furthest from the springs of official Soviet favour. This fact can easily be checked if the Soviet decrees since 1936 regulating the remuneration of various kinds of specialist labour are compared with each other. It would be more accurate, although still very one sided, to speak of the leading groups of Soviet society as 'technocracy'. To call them 'bureaucrats' is the most inaccurate description factional hatred could invent.

Again it is frequently assumed that the influential sections of Soviet society are made up of the 'well known people' (*sluzhatel'skie*), people in the most diverse walks of life who have earned official recognition and distinction, usually expressed by conferring on them one of the Soviet decorations. Such a description is merely a truism stressing the simple and incontrovertible fact that present Soviet society is in no way egalitarian. Once individual distinction has been bestowed and officially acknowledged by the state, the acknowledgment naturally brings with it increased social distinction for those thus singled out. In a political system dominated by one state party, distinctions of this sort probably bring preferment to those who wish to stand as candidates for the Soviets or other assemblies. It may even mean privileges in everyday life when places are few in a rest home in the Caucasus, or flats are short in newly built apartment houses, the man who has won some decoration is not likely to be among those suffering from the shortage. But he gets his flat, or place in the rest home, in his capacity of efficient worker in the factory, or as a renowned scientist, in fact for the reason that brought him the decoration, rather than for his decoration. Engineers who, far from being decorated, were serving sentences for sabotage, got similar privileges, in comparison with the average free engineer employee, because they were valuable specialists whose work had to be encouraged, even if they were working under the supervision of the G P U.<sup>25</sup> In a country where skilled labour of any description is as short as it is in the U S S R it is very likely to win a privileged position. The official acknowledgment of this or that man is rather the consequence than the cause of the enhanced position he enjoys. The eminent scientist or actor who has been missed by the periodical distributions of decorations would probably do better in the matter of holidays or house hunting than a Stakhanovist worker who has been decorated for his services, unless they were really of quite an exceptional character.

True, since public decorations became as widespread as they have

<sup>25</sup>See J. Scott, *Behind the Urals* London 1942, p. 74

been since the middle 'thirties,<sup>36</sup> a well-known scientist or actor, a higher commander of the Red Army or even the manager of one of the larger industrial undertakings without a decoration corresponding to his position would be rather exceptional. In such cases the decoration expresses rather the recognition for long and responsible service than any exceptional single achievement. With the worker or the peasant in the *kolkhos*, decoration is generally the reward of some individual achievement going far beyond the standard reasonably to be expected of one in his position. But even in these cases the distinction is very often a symbol of public policy and the needs of propaganda. When it was thought desirable to encourage the initiative of women members of the *kolkhoses*, the highest decoration of the U S S R. was awarded to large numbers of dairymaids or to forewomen in the collective sugar-beet plantations who had reached a high level of proficiency in their callings. The awards were made to all who reached certain fixed standards of production. But the level of these standards was so high that to achieve it often implied not mere diligence and industry, nor mere improvement of the methods of production, but real achievement in organization and education on the part of those who succeeded in leading their more backward fellows towards such results, or sometimes even the overcoming of direct sabotage. So there is some reason to give preference to an agricultural worker who has won a decoration if she wishes to obtain higher technical education and promotion to higher responsibility. One must not, however, imagine that successful agricultural workers, even in the U S S R., are always so ambitious that those who have been decorated are always promoted to higher positions.

The only truth in the idea that the most influential group in the U S S R. is made up of the 'well known people' is that the Soviet élite is not identical with, but wider than the 'Soviet intelligentsia'. And, of course, it is much wider than any special stratum of the intelligentsia, as expressed by 'bureaucracy' or 'technocracy'. Since political disabilities have been removed, the fact that 'brain-workers' are scarce and their work of the greatest economic importance will probably increase their social and political importance. At the moment, in the present period of transition, no description of the élite in the U S S R. can be very accurate, but it can be clearly stated that it forms no closed social group and that access to its ranks is open to all strata of the population.

<sup>36</sup>Previously, apart from their possible use by the Army in wartime, they were rather intended to signify quite extraordinary achievements on quite extraordinary occasions. So they had been very rare.

## *The New Outlook in Private Life*

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As the régime came to rely more and more on rewards as incentives for the citizen's participation in the national economic effort, individual freedom of choice in the expenditure of income became more important. The two strictly revolutionary periods—War Communism and the First Five-Year Plan—had been, essentially, egalitarian in outlook. In the first place, the country was poor, and could only maintain a bare subsistence level by concentrating on the most simple, and most standardized, products. Secondly, the intense strain of those years would have been intolerable had the simplest worker or peasant felt that there were people profiteering from his exertions and sacrifices. There were people, indeed, who tried to profiteer in commercial activities. As long as people were able to do good business within the field still open (legally or *de facto*) to the enterprise of the private capitalist, the state was bound to regulate such activities or risk defeat in the great experiment. Monetary inflation—inevitable during the revolutionary periods—worked, in fact, as one means of regulation, for it devalued such sums as the Nep-man or speculator might have saved. Puritan standards in social habits, quite apart from their moral influence on the working classes, worked in the same direction, the Nep-man who tried to 'enjoy' his 'earnings' became immediately suspect and risked having to pay for the merry evening crowning a successful speculation by spending a few years taking part, for a very low wage, in the reconstruction of the national water-communications.

But all this came to an end once there was no other way of earning money, of satisfying needs, or of obtaining luxuries, than by contribution to the national economic effort. Why should the state discourage the average citizen's strongest incentive for making the highest contribution? 'Life has grown better, life has grown merry', Stalin said—with good reasons in a speech he delivered, in December 1935, to the Stakhanovists. The popular propaganda described in vivid colours the various 'cultural' needs (some of them very commonplace for the Western employed worker) which any citizen could satisfy who played his part in production.

Now you must not imagine that at any period the average Soviet man or woman was as disinclined for such enjoyments as the average left-wing sympathizer abroad imagined. To import films produced abroad, generally of a very low artistic standard,<sup>37</sup> was, for the country which produced the best films in the world, always good business. The average

<sup>37</sup>The reasons for this fact may be the lack of Western films appealing, from the ideological point of view, to Soviet people—so a film was a film, and the less expensive ones would fill the quota (and the Soviet cinemas) as well as the others.



Moscow secretary or shop-assistant very much enjoyed at least seeing women wearing evening-dress, something which, in Russia, only the Nep-man did, and that very secretly! Now, she could buy a dress 'like that' (of course, it was not in fact exactly 'like that') with her overtime money, or with a premium for the diligent fulfilling of her duties during the year, and no one would criticize the dress as *bourgeois*—quite the contrary! If she was serious-minded, the trade-union organiser, and maybe her boy friend too, would urge her to spend the money on a nice trip with the trade-union's rambling-group across the Crimea during the holidays. In any case it would be worth while to earn the premium.

The new policy raised certain problems, as did the abandonment of the puritan ideology of former years. From the point of view of our friend's intellectual development as a good Soviet citizen it would be desirable for her to spend her money on seeing other parts of the Soviet fatherland, or on the theatre, or the cinema (with only an occasional imported film). From the point of view of obtaining the maximum output from the average typist, there is no doubt that a long dress and some jazz are likely to be more effective. To get the male worker production-minded, a teetotal approach to the interpretation of the 'merry life' would be ineffective—but too much 'merryness' was inadvisable from the point of view of production. On the whole the present writer's impression, while living in the country at that period, was that the enormous propaganda apparatus of the 'totalitarian' state solved the problem quite well. In the organization of public entertainments, of the broadcasting services and so forth, every kind of taste was catered for to some extent, though the main stress was laid on such culturally desirable kinds of entertainment as classical music,<sup>20</sup> lectures, etc. 1092

But then another question arose: from what point of view should the state consider its cultural activities? Merely from that of popular education, or from that of the activating influence cultural and other needs might exercise upon the citizens' production? During the first twenty years of the Revolution, cultural pleasures were nearly the only thing the state could supply in any adequate quantity beyond the bare necessities of life. But they were virtually free of charge. It was agreeable—and also useful from the point of view of public morale—that the Russian worker, if worse fed, clothed and housed than his comrade in the West, could enjoy music, theatre, pictures and even books of a quantity and quality quite beyond the reach of the latter. You could enjoy plays and opera and music virtually for nothing—that is to say as part of your return for your trade-union dues—at your club where the performances were, naturally, of very varying merit. Or you could, for

<sup>20</sup>Of course this compromise, as well as any other, was open to attacks from the point of view of 'pure ideology'. So Bukharin, in 1936, as editor of the *Iskrya*, reproached the broadcasting services for giving 'too much jazz instead of Beethoven'. I, personally, have in no country, including Germany of the Weimar Republic, listened to even half as much Beethoven, and have been nowhere so seldom forced to switch off to avoid hearing jazz. But there is always a case for 'pure ideologies'—provided you get listeners for a 'purely ideological' broadcasting service.

would become an idle dream. The story of Soviet policy as regards family life and education is a story of compromise between these two points of view, with increased emphasis on the latter. We must expect our reader to be influenced by a variety of progressive tendencies in his own country, and so he would probably get a distorted picture if we did not briefly survey earlier tendencies in this matter before discussing recent developments.

The Marxist theory and policy in such matters—as distinct from the ultra radical Western bohemian tendencies of some people who believe themselves to be Marxians—have changed little between the days when Engels wrote *The Origin of the Family, State and Society* and the later writings of Lenin and the framing of the matrimonial legislation of Soviet Russia, in 1917.<sup>41</sup> The so-called monogamous family with its less strict moral code for the man than the woman is the product of a system based upon private ownership of the means of production. This form of family involves the dependent economic position of women and the exclusive responsibility of parents for the education of their children. It is the only means to get legal heirs, and a suitable method of combining family fortunes, it is the necessary complement of a *bourgeois* society. Accordingly the task of a Socialist state is—after having taken over all the decisive means of production and granted to every citizen, man or woman, economic security irrespective of marriage—to organize social education on a much higher level than in any capitalist state, and to provide such social services as would reduce the duties of the housewife to a minimum and thus enable woman to continue her participation in social production and civic life after marriage. This once done and the legal restrictions on freedom of divorce removed, one might expect that marriage, or its equivalent,<sup>42</sup> would be based on nothing but the free decision of both partners. A glance at the writings of Lenin on the subject shows that the only consequences he did expect or desire was an increased stability of relations freely entered and continued. 'Lower middle-class radicalism' on this point as well as on the question of discouraging large families is strange to Marxism which considers Malthusianism to be a reactionary prejudice based on the conditions of a decaying society. So it has not been difficult for contemporary Soviet people to find, as a justification of their later policies, suitable quotations in classical writings.

<sup>41</sup>Obligatory civil registration of marriage, with reduction of eventual ecclesiastical ceremonial to the purely private sphere, and the freedom of divorce were established by one of the first enactments of the Soviet régime (December 1917). The freedom of abortion dates from 18 November 1920 and the completion of the modern matrimonial legislation by abolition of any difference in the position of the married and unmarried mother, and by the legal recognition of *de facto* marriage, dates from 1926. Already during that period, in 1924, a shortlived attempt to restrict legal abortion had been made. Unsuccessful as it was, it refutes the current Western conceptions of freedom of abortion as an essential and fundamental principle of original Soviet legislation.

<sup>42</sup>Soviet legislation since 1926 considered *de facto* marriages, established by a continuous common household, as equivalent to formal registration of a marriage at the Registrar's Office. But this rule was strongly disputed amongst Soviet lawyers during the last pre-war years and was abolished in 1944.

This does not mean that the above-mentioned tendencies in Western radicalism did not have their counterparts in Soviet life in the earlier period. 'Free love' has not always been interpreted by all Soviet authors as the mere absence of legal restrictions, and of social pressure impairing the free decision of the partners. But the moral influence of the Party, at least on its members, has always been brought to bear against licentiousness in 'private' matters and even against too frequent divorces which seemed to show an insufficiently serious approach to marriage. Thus, the law of 27 June, 1936 regarding divorce re-stated in legal terms a trend already constantly encouraged by means of 'public opinion' and internal party discipline. Under the new legal restrictions divorce was still accessible for everyone. But it had become something that needed some serious thought. Both parties had to be summoned so that the Registrar might make an attempt at reconciliation, and any divorce had to be entered in the partners' passports. Thus the ordinary citizen was induced to take account of public opinion, which previously had only concerned itself with the Party member. In addition, a progressive fee had to be paid which, from the third divorce onwards, amounted to about a third of the skilled worker's monthly income. Measures of this kind, although formulated as laws, still only amount to an attempt to influence a decision essentially left to the individual. But the legislation of 8 July, 1944 transferred divorce to the courts, establishing a complicated procedure evidently intended to be disagreeable and troublesome. Only after an attempt at reconciliation in the lower courts has failed, the higher court has the right, but no obligation, to dissolve the marriage, and according to its views regarding the responsibility for the dissolution of the marriage, levies one, or both parties with a fee from 500 to 2,000 roubles, against a maximum fee of 200 roubles under the former law. Even on the assumption that the court will determine the amount of the fee according to the economic position of the party to which it is charged, it is obvious that to demand a divorce, or to be regarded by the court as responsible for it, costs about a month's income. There is still as much freedom of divorce as in those capitalist countries that allow it—but no more. The difference from some—but not all—liberal legislation may be found in the lack of an enumeration of specialized reasons for divorce, and of the need to establish by judicial procedure adultery, cruelty, and so forth in cases where reasonable judges may simply find that the two partners to the marriage have become incompatible. But in cases where the judges or public opinion are resolved to deny divorce, the position of the partner seeking it may become rather more difficult in the U S S R than in countries where, for instance, proved adultery gives a claim to divorce. It is the expressed intention of the new legislation to protect the returning soldiers against being divorced by their wives, and it depends very much on public opinion whether the principle of equal rights of the sexes will be defended also where it may collide with patriotic sympathy for the warrior.

Abortion was allowed by the law of 18 November, 1920, because it was practically impossible to prevent it under the existing social conditions. If performed by experienced surgeons the operation would certainly do less harm than if done secretly. As a method of birth-control it was not thought of as anything but an evil, temporarily unavoidable, but to be fought by propaganda, and gradually to be overcome 'by working for Socialism, and by introducing the protection of maternity and infancy on an extensive scale' <sup>46</sup> In the U.S.S.R., too, there were people who would subscribe to the left wing slogan of the West about 'a woman's right to her own body'. But these tendencies never prevailed in Soviet policy.

In 1927, at the Ukrainian Congress of Physicians and Surgeons, <sup>47</sup> legalized abortion was described as 'a respite' after the intolerable social conditions which formed the heritage of Tsarism. The Ukrainian Commissary for Health declared <sup>48</sup> that Soviet legislation 'considered abortion a social evil and had legalized it merely in order to decrease the danger to health involved in secret abortion by quacks, and to further the struggle, by propaganda, against abortion in general. To speak of official encouragement of abortion in the U.S.S.R., prior to 1936, is simply to distort the facts. In order to have the operation performed free, a woman, if in good health, had to convince a special commission that in bringing up another child she faced extraordinary difficulties. As a rule, in the towns, it was only from the fourth child onwards that such difficulties, if alleged, would be presumed to exist. Further, the number of hospital beds available for abortion cases was restricted. Women who were not on the priority list might easily find themselves on a waiting list so long as to make it impossible to fulfil the medical requirement that the operation should only be carried out during the early months of pregnancy, when the risks are comparatively low. If the woman could not convince the Commission, she had to pay a fee—about half the average woman employee's monthly income. Thus the total prohibition of abortion as introduced by the law of 27 June, 1936 was only an advance in a direction whither Soviet policy had already been tending. But now, the state applied the highest possible pressure by making abortion an offence severely punishable, at least in the case of the person who performed the operation. The woman is still put on probation or made to pay only a small fine. What matters is the fact that, as in other countries with similar legislation, she will have the greatest difficulty in finding anyone to undertake the operation, except

<sup>46</sup>Text of the decree in H. C. Grist, *Socialist Medicine in the U.S.S.R.* London, 1937 pp. 264-5

<sup>47</sup>The discussions—especially from the purely medical point of view—were such that the German Society of Gynaecologists published the whole proceedings of the congress in 1933. It is true not without some bias in stressing certain features as an argument against the German left wing advocates of legal abortion. An extract is being published in my *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia* vol. 1 (Family) in The International Library for Sociology and Social Reconstruction.

<sup>48</sup>Loc. cit., p. 141

under the worst possible conditions, imposed by the need of secrecy

To any observer of the U S S R it must be clear that some, although not all, of the social conditions which led to the prevalence of abortion still exist, especially in matters of housing. There can be no doubt that a clear majority of the women who took part in the public discussion preceding the promulgation of the law of 1936 objected to the legal prohibition of abortion, although they could not be described as 'Malthusians' and certainly only a few of them supported the 'glass of water' conception of love. And, since the enactment of the law, there has been a considerable number of convictions under it.

In the U S S R there is no longer any unemployment and, therefore, no danger that an additional child may mean starvation for the family. But housing conditions being what they are, an extra child may well mean overcrowding the only available room. In spite of all the increased measures for developing crèches, etc., that accompanied the Anti-Abortion Act, an additional child may mean that the mother is handicapped in doing regular work. The government of the U S S R always did and still does all it can to encourage women's participation in industry. There must have been serious reasons for taking a step both unpopular and fraught with serious difficulties.

The most immediate of these reasons was, no doubt, the wish to stimulate the natural increase of population or, at least, to balance some trends likely to limit it. This consideration was bound to have much weight on the eve of a great war of which it was quite clear the U S S R would have to bear the main brunt. However great a victory the Soviet Union might win in actual warfare, she could emerge from the war as a first class world power only if provision was made for the replacement of her tremendous losses. Now observation of the long-term consequences of legal abortion has shown beyond reasonable doubt that, although the probability of immediate and noticeable damage done to the mother's health was slight<sup>49</sup> compared to the risks run if the operation were performed in secret, the general effect on female fertility is considerable. It might become even more considerable if, for another generation, abortion were to remain legal and, therefore, frequent. In the long run and considering the matter solely from the point of view of the next generation it might be true that even the death, or real mutilation, of a few thousand women under the conditions likely to prevail if abortion were driven 'underground', would involve less damage than repeated abortions on some million women, even if the operation was skilfully performed. And if abortion remained legal, it would be practised by some million women, whatever the weight of propaganda

<sup>49</sup>In the official propaganda of the law of 1936 the dangers of abortion under experienced medical supervision were certainly overstated. But it would be wrong not to take such statements seriously, especially as it was not very flattering when the operation was described as amounting in many cases, to mutilation. This if true, would involve a very sharp criticism of the Soviet surgeons unless the mutilation is intended to imply mere sterility which seems indeed a likely outcome of repeated abortions even under favourable conditions. See note 47.

against it. Given the whole psychology of Soviet life, the prohibition of abortion, together with a long list of measures to improve the material position of the mother, covering both her position in the factory and her right to alimony from the child's father, was a very effective way of bringing home to the national consciousness the importance of a high birthrate for the future of the U S S R. To use one of Stalin's expressions, 'child bearing is no less important a function of women in national life than sharing in social production'

Now there is, in present Russian life, one point where mere emphasis on the national interest in large families would be hardly sufficient to preserve the former birth rate and where a special appeal to the private interest of the family concerned was needed. The average Russian peasant's family has always been enormous. The reason was not only the cultural backwardness of the Russian village. This backwardness would not only encourage births, but also child mortality. There was also an economic reason which encouraged the peasant not only to have children, but also to try seriously to bring them up. The communal, i.e., village-owned land,<sup>50</sup> for many centuries has been redistributed periodically among the peasants according to the number of 'souls', i.e., to the size of the family. As long as individual peasant husbandry prevailed, a larger family meant more land—even if, for lack of capital, the additional land had to be let to the kulak neighbour, and the additional children had to work on his field as labourers. In the kolkhos, additional children do not mean more land. Whether their additional earnings will contribute to the parents' household will depend on whether they remain in the village at all—as, under conditions of progressive industrialization, only some of the peasant's children are likely to remain—and on how long the patriarchal conception of family life can survive. For many years, during the struggle with the old village tradition, the new regime encouraged the rebellion of the younger generation against the old. Once the collectivization of agriculture had been successfully accomplished, it was to the public interest 'to strengthen family life', quite apart from the fact that, by doing so, peasants previously disposed to be critical of the regime might be won over. But under normal conditions the young peasant who had become a skilled worker in the kolkhos and earned a large enough income to maintain his own family, could not be expected to continue the traditional financial connection with the parents' household, apart from the occasional filial tributes made in any society. So the peasant's wife no longer has the old inducements<sup>51</sup> to increase the family beyond the limits which would now seem reasonable by the new cultural standards.

<sup>50</sup>Prior to the 1917 revolution the part of the land which belonged to the peasants (as distinct from the landlords and, since the Stolypin reforms, the kulaks) after 1917, virtually all the land.

<sup>51</sup>The kulak always had been economically more far sighted: he had avoided too far going divisions of the inheritance and employed the poorer neighbour's odd children, while saving on the wages payable to them by 'additionally' hiring their 'odd land shares'.

This measure of family limitation she could achieve without recourse to abortion, which was very infrequent in the village even when permitted.

It was for these reasons that the first measures to introduce state aid to mothers with many children, in the act of 27 June, 1936, concentrated only on mothers with more than six living children, with a highly increased rate from the eleventh child onwards. It is clear that the encouragement of families of this size has nothing to do with fighting Malthusian prejudices, and that a mother who wants to win one of these awards must sacrifice the hope of enjoying some sides of life, and be satisfied simply to fulfil the function of the child bearer (though it is true that the kind of woman to whom these awards appealed had, previously, done no better). Certainly the sum of money needed to pay highly impressive premia (more than any peasant woman, apart from a few specialists, could normally earn in productive activities) to some thousands of giant families would have had little effect if it had been distributed among the millions of families of the size most to be encouraged—say, those with three or four children in the towns and five or six in the villages. Apart from this, political difficulties would have been involved in discriminating clearly between town and village according to the different size of family needing encouragement and compatible under either condition with continued productive and social activity of the mother.

In the midst of the war, under the pressure of its ravages on the young generation and the threat to the birth rate involved, the Soviet dared, in the legislation of 8 July, 1944, to offer state aid to all mothers of more than three children,<sup>22</sup> consisting of non-recurring payments varying from 1,300 roubles for the fourth to 5,000 roubles for the tenth and every subsequent child, and monthly payments varying from 80 to 300 roubles payable from the second to the fifth birthday of the child. Such a gradation of the state aid granted contradicts the actual structure of the family budget, which is certainly not burdened by the tenth child to a higher degree than it was by the fourth, but high subsidies for the fourth or fifth child would have involved subsidising, in the countryside, children who were likely to have been born had there been no grant, whilst for the small minority already benefiting from the 1936 legislation a standard was established below which subsequent legislation could not go without threatening public confidence in promises made by the state. Even for that minority the state aid was increased—for the ninth and tenth child by more than 50 per cent, thus, the tendency to concentrate subsidies on the largest families may be regarded as continuing. It is further accentuated by the fact that the subsidies for large families cease at the child's fifth birthday—this is long before it ceases to be a material burden for the family, whatever support may be given in

<sup>22</sup>Already for the third a non-recurring payment of 400 roubles at birth is made but this is nothing novel in comparison with social legislation existing in some other countries and only adds to some existing claims, e.g. of the Soviet mother who is a trade-union member.

kindergartens and schools. Except for those unmarried mothers who prefer to transfer their children, when five years old, to a public educational institution, there is some incentive to cover the expenses for the education of the elder children by having new ones, and certainly this was desired by the authors of the decree, and forms the only rational explanation for the gradation of the subsidies. The established scale of medals and orders for mothers raising a numerous family, culminating in the title 'Heroine Mother' for those who have reared ten living children suggests an approach to the family problem in which the economic and social activities of women become secondary to the population issue. It may be added that the state, by shouldering the total costs of educating the children of unmarried mothers, and considerably easing the burden on married couples having many children, has obscured the concept—not forgotten in 1936 when abortion was prohibited and obligations of unmarried fathers to pay alimony were made more strict—that care for children would work as an incentive to increased industry on the part of their parents. By a combination of taxes on bachelors and citizens with small families up to two children (in the latter case amounting to no more than a half per cent of the income) with the subsidies for medium and large families, the state has obviously tried to equalize the economic position of small and large families, just as the distinctions granted to the 'Heroine Mothers' are intended to compensate for those not likely to be earned in industry or on the collective fields.

Certainly the state, when making motherhood an honoured and, under some conditions, a remunerative profession, was very far from regarding it as the only or even the main one open to women. The needs of the approaching war would have been quite sufficient to prevent such an interpretation of the 1936 legislation, and shortly after its enactment the Soviets encouraged new movements with such slogans as 'Women to the tractors', with the intention of replacing man power even in peacetime by woman power as far as possible. As for the women already employed in skilled industry, various steps were taken to prevent a return to domesticity on the occasion of childbirth: the amount<sup>52</sup> of the wages which were paid before and after the birth were increased. It is true, by the laws of 1938, the period of these payments, and the pregnancy leave from the factory were cut to six weeks before and after childbirth, instead of the previous eight weeks. To get the paid leave, a woman needed a certain minimum period of previous uninterrupted employment. So the influx of unskilled women into industry, during pregnancy, was discouraged. The purpose of the measure was to stop certain evident misuses of paid pregnancy leave, but nevertheless it is clear that the state would not have taken such measures if it had still been interested in an indiscriminate increase of the number of women employed in industry. In 1943, the abolition of co-education has been

<sup>52</sup>Before 1937, wages and salaries only up to a maximum of 300 roubles—i.e. the average income of the semi-skilled woman worker or employee—were paid, this maximum limitation has been abolished, so that pregnancy no longer involves material loss for the skilled woman worker or employee.



officially interpreted as a step designed to improve the preparation of Soviet girls for their duties as housewives and mothers, and also for some professions deemed specially suitable for women. Evidently, this involves a restriction of the opportunities for women in other professions, where they have hitherto been encouraged to compete with men. But too abstract an approach to the issue would be misleading. Most English feminists would be highly satisfied if in their country the attitude defended by Red Army men would prevail, namely that the medical profession, as distinct from engineering, was 'a woman's job'.

For some time, in certain special fields the state had tried to increase the social prestige of the housewife, provided she kept in touch with her husband's activities in the public service by some social work, even if merely voluntary and occasional. The first step to be taken in this direction was the organization in 1936 of meetings in the Kremlin of wives of officers engaged in some sort of welfare work among the troops, which Stalin addressed and at which some of the more prominent women were distinguished by the distribution of orders. Within a short time meetings of the 'wives of the directors and engineers' followed. In the mining districts, where there is little productive work available for women, the 'wives of the Stakhanovists' were added—although the description of women by their husbands' social status hardly becomes more democratic, or more compatible with Socialist principles, by being applied to workers as well as to managers. There were, in all these cases, good reasons for departing from the general conception that the citizen should be measured by her own and not her husband's contribution to the common weal. This conception might easily interfere with the husband's employment in some far away frontier garrison or pioneering in the Urals. The wife might use services rendered in some Moscow office as a good pretext for an unwillingness to part with the social amenities of Moscow life, the 'best friends', the theatres, the fashionable shops, and so on. With the authorities, her work as a typist in Moscow weighed more lightly than the substantial improvement in the morale of her indispensable specialist husband, quite apart from the services she might really render as a social worker at her husband's new place of employment. In most cases—including those of the 'wives of the Stakhanovists' of the mining industry—the new 'movements of wives' would touch women who in no case would have made a serious contribution to industry. Now, instead of being merely accepted as a temporarily inevitable evil, the housewife of this type received social recognition on condition that she did some kind of social work. Sometimes it was no more or less important than some done in this country by various women's voluntary services, sometimes it led to women's acquiring some valuable professional qualification. In many cases it meant that the daughters of the former ruling classes were assimilated into the new intelligentsia. At the same time it involved such a wide interpretation of the maxim 'he who does no work shall not eat' that the new society lost some of its original theoretical strictness.

Recognition at least in part of the social function of the housewife was one point where the original theoretical conception of family life changed—and changed to a far greater degree than the actual conditions which had never corresponded to the theory. A second point was the change in the supposed role of family and home in education. In fact the limited resources of the Soviet state had always prevented communal education from doing more than ease the burden of the working mother by creches, kindergartens, and so on in addition to caring for children who are state wards in any continental country—the homeless, the sick, the criminal or those exposed to the dangers of criminal environments. The remarkable thing about the wonderful work the Soviets did—and do—in these fields is not that state education is so widespread before the establishment, in 1944, of the right of any unmarried mother to have her children brought up in public educational institutions: state education hardly covered any group it (or corresponding private charities) would not include in this country too. But it does not regard such children as the dregs of human society to be dealt with by special methods, or, at the best, to be saved to enter some subordinate place in ordered society. Living in *Bolshevo* for example, is nothing like serving a term in *Borstal*. It is not a punishment at all, but simply living and working at a special place of education, just as other children live and are educated elsewhere. As a result, there is neither need nor desire to leave this place of education before it has fulfilled its normal function of teaching the pupil his or her job. Many teachers and foremen in the workshops, and so on go on living within the community as long as they can do useful work. They are kept there by their interest in this work, and not at all by fear lest they should be handicapped in finding suitable work elsewhere because of their ‘criminal past’. In fact, the absence of such fear, and of any social stigma, is one of the main assets of the Soviet education of these ‘difficult’ types of children. This attitude has certainly been assisted still more by the original conception that what they enjoyed was not ‘special treatment’ at all. It was, according to the original ideology, simply that communal education which the state would eventually be able to provide for all children, being organized first for those whose homes were unsatisfactory.

But according to early Soviet theory, education in the home was always somewhat unsatisfactory. For the children of the workers and peasants, education at home was unsatisfactory because their homes were too poor to provide surroundings conducive to learning, but, at any rate, the atmosphere would be friendly to the Soviet regime. With the middle-classes and especially with the old intelligentsia the surroundings were more favourable but the regime felt compelled to fight for the allegiance of the children against the political traditions of the parents and the home. Therefore, the children were discouraged from respecting the authority of their parents and of teachers bred up in the old traditions.

In the middle of the ‘thirties the position had changed. The old intel

ligentsia was, in part, won over, in part replaced by a new intelligentsia grown up since the Revolution. There was no longer any need to decry their authority *qua* parents and teachers, or to point, in opposition to them, to some remote future when the state would take over all education. From the point of view of actual politics the Soviet citizen's home was a most valuable asset, a stronghold of Soviet patriotism. The Soviet teacher's authority was another. With some shift of emphasis the original Marxian conception of family and education could be brought nearer to the hearts of the sons and daughters of that progressive Russian intelligentsia, for whom Chernishevsky had written *What To Do*, and the elder Tolstoy had created Anna Karenina, 'a great Russian woman' as official Soviet propaganda now describes her.

The Revolution was over: it had created a new society by assimilating all that had been vital in the old and destroying the rest. As in all great revolutions of modern times the new society, bred by the Revolution, had fallen short of some of the ideals of those who accomplished it. *De facto* marriage,<sup>44</sup> as introduced in 1926 for most of the Soviet Republics, was never regarded as an ideal solution<sup>45</sup> and the public interest in the divorce laws not being misused has always been emphasized, but there can be no doubt that the status of marriage as established by the 1944 legislation is nearer to the concepts of moderate Liberals—in the Western sense—than to those not only of Engels but even of Lenin.<sup>46</sup>

While the stabilization of the new society involved some retrenchment from the original ideology of the Revolution, official policy during the war was in some ways more radical than most people expected during the first revolutionary period. The front-line soldier wanted a home to which to return, and preserving the soldiers' homes meant that the state was obliged to exert direct and indirect pressure on the soldiers' wives to make them wait patiently for their husbands. There was also the problem of the children who were the results of the soldiers' amatory adventures on their way from the Volga to the Danube, a problem which was aggravated by the disturbance of the numerical equilibrium between the sexes. To encourage the surplus women into an ultra-feminist attitude and make them prefer celibacy and social labour to love and children would have been an impossible situation in view of the population policy. Equally impossible would have been the protection of monogamy by the devices current in other countries, such as double standards for men and women and discrimination against 'bastards', for such devices could not be applied by the Soviet in view of its basic principles. Therefore, by the laws of 8 July, 1944, together with the measures for strengthening the stability of marriage, the

<sup>44</sup>See note 45.

<sup>45</sup>The public interest in registering marriages was emphasized in the preamble to the very law that legalized *de facto* marriage and in those (Mohammedan) republics where (in order to fight backward custom) that interest was overwhelming, *de facto* marriage has never been recognized.

<sup>46</sup>See Clara Zetkin's *Reminiscences of Lenin* (London, 1929), a book the main emphasis of which lies in stressing Lenin's rejection of extremist concepts of Free Love.

responsibility for children of unmarried mothers was taken over by the state. Thus, the claims for alimony, hitherto a rather preponderant feature of Soviet legal relations, are gradually growing fewer. It lies in the very nature of things that the state cannot differentiate amongst the children it supports, and cannot shoulder responsibilities beyond what the average Soviet citizen would have shouldered under the former legislation. State assistance, gradually (but not progressively, as in the case of premia for mothers with many children) increases from the first to the third child, and amounts approximately to what a skilled worker in the countryside, or a semi-skilled one in the town, was likely to pay as a maintenance allowance under the former legislation. The allowance ceases at the twelfth birthday of the child, i.e. at the time when a child in the country can start working in the *kolkho*s, and in the towns enter a technical (or military) school where he is completely provided for by the state. An unmarried mother with three and more children receives, of course, apart from the state aid for the first three, general assistance for mothers with large families,<sup>47</sup> i.e. progressively increasing subsidies which cease at the child's fifth birthday. She can place every child at any time in a public institution for children where the state—instead of paying assistance to the mother—shoulders all expenses for the education of the child, and she can remove it from that institution at any time in order to bring it up herself. The problem of what to do with the fourth and the subsequent children after their fifth birthday, i.e. when the state subsidy ceases, is solved for her. The unmarried mother is actually free—at least as long as no social prejudices emanating from the 'married sector' of society interfere with her social status and professional promotion. She can have as many children as she likes under conditions which leave to her discretion whether she prefers to restrict the number of children educated in her home—and the age up to which they will remain there—so as to be able to continue industrial or professional work, or prefers to make the education of her children her profession. Thus, besides a strengthening of marriage which would satisfy quite Conservative demands, Russian woman is offered the choice of 'free motherhood' according to the most extreme ideals of radical feminists and the very fact that, in a country with a large deficit of men, marriage is likely to be rather man-dominated, may influence the choice made by the younger generation of Soviet women. The state, whatever it says about 'strengthening the Socialist family as the elementary cell of our society' is bound to see that 'Heroine Mothers' are not discriminated against merely because they are unmarried. Public boarding-school education will be more important than it has ever been.

How is the new society to educate its rising generation? The U.S.S.R. of the first fifteen years had been the most progressive country in education in the world, both in experiment and in the extensive application of the results of experiment. It was the country where the

<sup>47</sup>See p. 59.

keenest experimental schools were to be found and, at the same time, the country that had succeeded in liquidating illiteracy in a single decade. The Russia of the middle 'thirties wanted to keep the lead, and even to speed up the spread of general knowledge. But she believed that all her forces must be concentrated on this effort. Anything that might distract energies which ought to be concentrated on transforming the former peasant into a skilled worker and increasing the technical efficiency of the professions was clearly dangerous for a country preparing to face the great test of a war which was to be fought by tanks, aeroplanes, and the efficiency of technical leadership. The new experimental teaching methods might develop the intellectual abilities of some tens of thousands of gifted boys and girls. But there was no guarantee that they would give what, in the moment of crisis, would matter most—concrete knowledge.

To impart knowledge of the ordinary sort, within the grasp of the ordinary boy or girl,<sup>48</sup> taught by the ordinary well-tried methods, was to be the aim of all educational effort. The most effective way of promoting the acquisition of this sort of knowledge was through school discipline of the old sort, which was also useful as a preparation for the necessary discipline in industry as well as in the Army. To look for new methods meant concentrating the efforts of hundreds of the best teachers of the country on some problematic experiments with some thousands of children, while millions of children still attended inadequately staffed village schools. It was on these grounds that the 'model schools' were abolished in 1936, not without hints that in many cases they were models in name only. In the following year the official criticism of advanced experiments in teaching became even more bitter. The school of 'pedology', which formerly had prevailed, had aimed at studying the special psychological characteristics of each child rather than at educating it in the traditional sense of preparation for its future profession. This school was now condemned in the strongest terms. It was proclaimed that it had dealt with the normal child as if it were a pathological case, instead of giving the ordinary child as much concrete knowledge as it could absorb, as the true teacher ought to do.

The observer outside Russia who was keenly interested in some experiments advanced even from the standpoint of his own country may be disappointed at their abandonment in the country which he expected to lead the way. He must not forget that, within that country, there were some hundreds of thousands of teachers who were much relieved at being allowed to give up strange methods of which they could make little. Apart from that, the authorities thought that, on the basis of hard facts, what the state could afford to spend on education would be better spent on additional monthly roubles for the village teacher's salary,

<sup>48</sup>Formerly the distinction between secondary school and university curricula, had been broken down: now there was more differentiation again, but the new curricula, if fulfilled, can stand comparison with those of any other country. See e.g. the class-programmes reprinted in the appendix of *Children in Soviet Russia*, by Deana Levin (London, 1942).

than on some new experimental schools' Not the new, but the old, well tried methods were the best if one had to meet the Germans whose teaching methods were hardly advanced at all, but who were well drilled and possessed the best technical schools in the world. Even prior to the war, the pupils in the new public technical schools in the U S S R. were already wearing uniform. For the average worker's child getting to and through the university is a matter of passing all examinations with honours. The reversal of policy was, probably, the surest method of meeting the Germans in the forties of the twentieth century—and this may be regarded as a sufficient justification. Of course, meeting the Hitlerite Germans is not the final test of social progress, but without successfully meeting them there could be no further progress, in education or elsewhere.

## *The Constitution in Practice*

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### *(a) Is the Soviet State Totalitarian?*

IN SPEAKING OF THE Soviet citizen's private life, we have already more than once mentioned the influence of the state. The need to consider some of the essential features of this state increases, when we come to speak of the position of the citizen as such. Has he any rights at all, or is he merely an object of public policy?

This is, probably, the most controversial matter of all those discussed in this book. We must, therefore, begin by clearing up some concepts which have led to great confusion through the use of identical words in very different senses. These concepts are those of the 'totalitarian state' and of 'dictatorship'. We do not intend to reduce these concepts, in their application to the U S S R, to commonplaces. Therefore we shall not be satisfied with the description of every state that controls the whole economic life of a country as 'totalitarian', as is the custom with liberal ideologies. Nor shall we give undue advantage to the advocate of Marxism by describing as a dictatorship every state that protects a certain socio-economic structure and, therefore, the interests of the social class interested in the preservation, or the achievement, of that structure. As no state can protect more than one socio-economic structure and no compromises in that fundamental issue are possible, every state can thus be described as the 'dictatorship' of the social class interested in that structure whatever concessions are made to other class interests in the details of working the accepted system. But, obviously, such definitions cannot prove that all states are equally dictatorships.

By 'totalitarian' we mean the restriction of the freedom of individual citizens by a socio-political system dominating all aspects of their lives and regulating all their actions. A church, for example, can be just as totalitarian as a state, and in many historical instances this theoretical possibility has been realized. There is little sense in discussing the individual's freedom only in relation to the state, and to regard it as granted wherever regulation by the state is limited. Certainly, there may be more freedom for the individual if a number of competing organizations share in his control, but this does not necessarily follow: the organizations may also supplement each other's activities. The unofficial agency of 'public opinion' may carry capital punishment by enforcing the suicide of a person who has committed no illegal action whatever—say an unmarried mother, and the very 'democratic' character of a state, that is to say, allowing lower middle-class public opinion to dominate its juries, may result in failure to prevent such ostracism. When discussing the 'totalitarian' character of the U S S R, we are

interested in comparison with conditions of other countries not only in that control as exercised by the state, but the degree of *all* control to which the individual citizen is subject

By 'dictatorship' we mean the degree to which the influence exercised by the state is centralized, as opposed to the hypothetical concept that every citizen should equally participate in shaping all the public commands which he has to obey (not to democracy in the sense of majority-rule, which may involve complete suppression of the minority). Obviously there are gradations according to the number of citizens participating in the formation of the 'common will' and the degree of participation allowed to those of them who do not directly belong to the government. There is no necessary connection between 'dictatorship' and 'totalitarianism'. Bonapartism was a distinct form of dictatorship almost approaching the extreme concentration of political power in a single person in a state with little more than police functions. Calvinist communities though controlling nearly all the life of their members, were rather democratic in the sense that every member was admitted to a share of that control.

There is no doubt that the Soviet state is totalitarian in the sense that it possesses not only highly centralized political power but also the control of virtually all the economic forces existing within its territory. It is totalitarian also in the sense that there is no matter on which there is not some 'Party line', i.e. no sphere of human life outside the purview of the state. On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. is not totalitarian in the sense that she feels herself bound to interfere in any sphere merely for the sake of regulation. Nor does she regard herself as the ultimate end in human life, as do the fascist states, or, in general, states with a racial basis. Marxism, the ideology of the Soviet state, is simply nineteenth-century Western democracy carried to its logical conclusions. There is, for Marxism, no value above the free development of human personality. The Soviet state which recognizes the equal rights of its many nations and rejects the idea of the supernatural would find it impossible to conceive of its activities from any other point of view than that of furthering the ultimate development of human personality and individuality. Naturally, its views of human personality differ widely from those which assign to private property a central position within the scheme of things.

Having cleared up this point, we can discuss the first question. Are there any compelling reasons why the state in the U.S.S.R. should in certain fields refrain from exerting its enormous powers to the full, thus leaving a certain amount of free play for the exercise of the individual initiative and choice of the citizen? At the beginning of the last chapter, we saw that a major object of policy in the U.S.S.R. was to raise the productivity of labour. His earnings are the citizen's share in the national income, a share he can only obtain by taking part in the productive efforts of the nation, and they constitute his major incentive to work. It is therefore greatly to the interest of the state to interfere as little as possible with the way in which people spend their earnings. Of course,



this affects the life of the individual mostly in its externals—but it would be wrong to consider it as a purely external matter. Economic security brings with it also a freedom of choice which, for the average worker, may exceed the merely legal freedom of choice which workers, citizens of other countries, enjoy. In many matters this increased actual freedom of choice may compensate for far-reaching legal or political restrictions created by the state monopoly which has made economic security possible. In the U S S R, choice in contemporary literature, including even poetry, will be strongly influenced by the public 'literary policy' (which we shall discuss in a later chapter), and the daily morning paper will be more strictly controlled by the state than in any other country in the world. But, whilst it is not true that caviare, or even butter every day, are within the reach of every Soviet citizen, the classics of all nations are.

In many cases where the Soviet state develops a public policy in matters which in other countries are left to the decisions of the individual, it simply exercises functions which are elsewhere fulfilled by unofficial 'public opinion'. In the U S S R the state concentrates in its own hands all the powers of economic pressure and propaganda. It must, accordingly, shoulder the whole responsibility for any use made of this power, a responsibility which more 'liberal' states may evade by allowing other agencies to exercise an unofficial but not necessarily less effective pressure. In many states the real problem of freedom arises just beyond the theoretical 'sphere of freedom' established by a liberal legislation. For example, how far is a teacher free to be an atheist or a believing Christian, what is the position of the unmarried mother, and so on, in Western countries? These states cannot be said to do all they can to combat unofficial pressure in such questions. Most of what is called 'religious persecution' in the Mohammedan areas of the U S S R is really an attempt to maintain the personal freedom of women. It is part of the struggle to gain for them freedom to choose their husbands for themselves and to enjoy some cultural life. This struggle has to be fought, *inter alia*, against the mullahs who incite 'public opinion' to go to any length, even sometimes to commit murder, to maintain women in what is practically serfdom. One can make out a case against the policy pursued by the U S S R in such matters if one believes that the group—the local or denominational group—is entitled to override the rights of the individual. But to argue thus is not to argue from the point of view of individual freedom. The dictatorship of the state may be the least totalitarian of all the contending factors involved.

*It cannot be denied that the Soviet state is totalitarian, in the sense that it interferes with matters which most people would think should be left solely to personal choice. Generally, such interference is not dictated by doctrinaire considerations but restricted to matters in which some immediate political or propagandist interest is involved. The Communist ideology is, for example, certainly more clearly hostile to traditional religion than to some ultra positivist philosophies. In spite of*

this, it would be no help to a man who aspired to an academic career to profess such a philosophy. Unless one has chosen a career where one needs the Party ticket, or which has anything to do with political propaganda, one could always profess without any risk the Christian orthodox or any other religious faith. One can even be a university professor, say of archaeology, and at the same time be an active member of one's church. The reason for this difference is not that the state would consider orthodox Christianity nearer to its own point of view than, for example, Machian<sup>59</sup> philosophies. It is that the people who propagate philosophies intend to influence the general ideological outlook, whilst the average church member only wants to be allowed to follow his traditional line. Such people are sufficiently numerous for it to be in the interest of the state to leave them free to do as they like in this matter. In some practical measures—certainly for merely practical reasons—far more attention than any legal obligations that the state would admit is paid to this group's susceptibilities. When, in 1940, a 7-day week replaced the 6-day week, Sunday became the weekly rest day. Admittedly this was done to prevent the peasants from taking two holidays—the state<sup>60</sup> and the religious—not to encourage religious belief, but the state did not refrain from action that was bound to result in stronger congregations.

While state control has been extended to cover almost the whole of economic life, the private sphere left to the citizen in 'non political' matters has also been extended. For example, under the NEP moral pressure was used to achieve a limitation of private incomes although they might be earned,<sup>61</sup> and of the ways of spending them. At that time the state took an interest in the 'social origin' of students and the wives of responsible officers. The Communist youth were at that time allowed to mock other people's religious beliefs or superstitions. All these things had ceased before the war. This may merely mean that the state has become more self confident and that it can waive the cruder methods of demonstrating its approval or disapproval. But, in any case, it proves that the Soviet state is not totalitarian for totalitarianism's sake.

Even more complicated is the problem of dictatorship. For here we are confronted with a term which the Soviet state has itself consciously employed, but which is now used in different senses.

When Marx on the eve of the revolution of 1848, and Lenin on the eve of the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 used the term 'dictatorship of the working-classes' the use of this term meant simply an alternative to collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie, and implied an analogy between the political role of the working class (in 1905 workers' and peasants' parties) in the expected revolution and that played by the

<sup>59</sup>On the Continent, and especially in Russia, Mach is regarded as the main representative of the modern positivist school of philosophy.

<sup>60</sup>Which, of course, had formerly varied (in terms of the Christian calendar) from week to week.

<sup>61</sup>Besides, as regards manual workers the maximum earnings for Party members were at no time enforced.

Jacobins in the French Revolution in 1793. It did not mean an alternative to the democratic principle of majority rule, and in so far as it was opposed to democracy in the Western sense it was thought of as a merely temporary expedient. The open ballot, the exclusion of the former ruling classes from the franchise and—most important of all—a way of conducting elections that shifted the electoral balance in favour of the industrial workers, all of these were merely temporary means to establish the rule of a working class party in a country with an overwhelming peasant majority. The rule of this party once sufficiently established, all these distinct features of the Soviet system could be dropped while claiming its continued identity with what had been established in 1917. The 1936 constitution was essentially a concession to the growing self confidence of the peasants. At the same time it was an act of appeasement to opponents defeated in the Civil War, by the grant of equality in civic rights, without changing anything in the political balance.

But why then retain not only the fact, but also the name of dictatorship, and what does it mean, now? With Lenin, the proletarian dictatorship was an alternative policy to that of coalition with middle-class parties, as realized for example by the Central European Social Democrats, and it was used as an argument against those who would have wished the policy of the Russian Bolsheviks to submit to the fact that in 1917 they would have been unable to win a majority by the usual system of parliamentary elections. For Stalin, in 1936, that alternative had ceased to exist in any sense, in retaining the term dictatorship, he evidently referred to the one-party system, and the restriction of the use of political rights as granted by the constitution to those who would use them 'in order to strengthen the Socialist system', as interpreted by the Party.<sup>12</sup> To grant political rights, however formal, to former enemies of the régime necessarily opened up the possibility that present enemies of the régime might make use of these rights. During the public discussion of the 1936 constitution there had been no lack of voices who interpreted this constitution as an indication that the proletarian dictatorship had solved its main problems and had therefore become superfluous. Stalin clearly thought such expectations so dangerous to the continued rule of his party that he preferred to stress the dictatorial, i.e. the one party, element of the new constitution. Thus the elections to the new parliamentary bodies were organized very differently from what might have been expected when Stalin, in his interview with Roy Howard, had promised that these elections should become a whip against inefficient Communist administrators who had been unable to win the sincere support of the majority of the local electorate. It is quite possible that the development of the internal crisis within the ruling group, which later became apparent in the purges, prevented Stalin from going as far in loosening the grip of dictatorship as he might have intended to do originally. But whether

<sup>12</sup>Articles 125-6 of the Constitution.

more or less strict, whether stressed in official phraseology or not, the one party system as such (in this sense, a continuation of dictatorship) was an essential condition of the survival of the Soviet regime.<sup>42</sup>

In popular criticism abroad, Russian dictatorship is often interpreted as something much wider than the exclusive rule of one party, and the restriction of the effective use of political rights to its supporters. The term 'dictator' is used as describing the rule of a single person, as in ancient Rome (but without the restriction to a very short term of office to which the Roman dictator was subjected), or the position of fascist dictators like Mussolini and Hitler. The fact that the dictatorship, in the U.S.S.R., has been established and continued through a period of extreme crisis, including, especially, the 'Revolution from above', not only made for centralization, it also inevitably enhanced the prestige of the leading personality, especially in a peasant country like Russia. But in the U.S.S.R., as distinct from the fascist dictatorships, there is no ideological bias in favour of one man's rule as opposed to democratic discussions and decisions. There is, in the U.S.S.R., no suggestion of a 'leader principle'—all authority is supposed to come from below, and only from below. However enormous in fact, is the leading personality's role in forming public opinion, his authority is only derived from that of the Party, and the Party's authority comes only from its ability to understand and to express the needs and the desires of the masses of the people. Stalin himself went so far as to oppose the proposal—made during the discussion of the Constitution—to introduce an elected President of the Union instead of the present collective body that exercises the supreme functions, although the proposal evidently was made in his own favour. His arguments against the proposal were very characteristic. He spoke not of the merits or demerits of leadership by one predominant personality as opposed to a committee of equals, but simply of the risks of a bad choice and the consequent risks to the state. Of course, within the Soviet system, as in any political system that does not emphasize the principle of division of powers, a gifted and influential man can rise to a position of virtual dictatorship. His chances of doing so are greater under the constitution of the U.S.S.R. than under the British (although a state of things where only one of the leaders was released from departmental burdens would be unthinkable in the U.S.S.R.) Even if the leading personality in the U.S.S.R. were, in fact, only the visible head of a committee of equals, as some British Prime Ministers have been, in a country with a peasant majority accustomed to icons he would be likely to get quite a lot of publicity in the display of portrait-posters. The struggle about the pros and cons of the one-party system, and of the policies of a party presided over by him, would be most likely to centre round his personality. But the Soviet no less than the British system could, if necessary, function without any outstanding personality, without any 'dictator'—provided only that the problem of organizing collaboration among a group of equally gifted people would be solved.

<sup>42</sup>See pp. 32 ff.

How far does the political structure of the Soviet state influence its relations to the individual citizen? The ideological construction of any state influences the way in which all its links work, even if very little in the actual work of these respective links corresponds to the ideology. It would, for example, clearly be an overstatement to say that parliamentary democracy is irrelevant to the functioning of the administration of one of those southern states of the U.S.A. where, lacking a sufficiently strong opposition party, the influence of the two-party system as a check on administrative abuses hardly corresponds to any reality and where, for this or that reason, resort to the courts is a somewhat theoretical remedy against abuses of the party administration. The fundamental assumption that political power in the U.S.A. ultimately emanates from the people will, even in those states, influence the average official's way of dealing with his potential electors, however restricted the power of any particular elector to avenge mismanagement may be. To give another example, the local *Amtswalter* of one of the various Nazi organizations in Germany was certainly not a local leader in the sense of official German ideology: in fact he worked as a subordinate official in a huge centralized bureaucracy whose everyday routine even the supreme 'leader', Adolf Hitler, could influence only in a very restricted degree. However, the theory of 'leadership', passing down from the supreme leader to his lowest local representative, gave to the latter's actions against any German subordinated to him the character of arbitrariness, masquerading as 'the leader's creative initiative', and hardly challengeable as long as it could be somehow supported by some alleged consideration of public interest and by the orders of a higher leader. In this sense fascism, with its essential theory of creative leadership as opposed to 'mechanical legality', involves absolute arbitrariness of the powers that be. It is dictatorship not merely in that it concentrates political power in a particular social and political group but also in that this power is exercised ruthlessly without having to recognize any legal boundaries. Any legal rule may be subordinated at any moment by a representative of the state to his interpretation of the common weal which he uses as a justification for overriding the rights of the individual. Dictatorship is thought by many critics to mean this in the U.S.S.R. too. But conceptions like the ones just described are strange to post-revolutionary Soviet ideology. More properly the previous analogy could be applied: that of a system working, to a certain degree, according to its democratic ideology, although some of the guarantees of the rights of the individual elector, as current in this country, are lacking.

Avowedly, the U.S.S.R. avoids the division of power between various supreme organs of the body politic, and between contending political parties which, in classical parliamentary democracy, makes for a certain balance and so prevents the exercise of arbitrary power by the servants of the state. And, further, the U.S.S.R. does not grant the political adversaries of the regime, in matters connected with politics, the ordinary legal guarantees. For dealing with opponents, the U.S.S.R.

has a special organ which, like military jurisdiction in other countries, pays less regard to individual rights than the normal legal procedure, and can only be controlled by superior state officials. Certainly, there can be no other justification for such a state of things than the most urgent needs of a struggle for survival. All the same, the official of the Soviet state is obliged to deal with the average citizen not as a subject, but as an element of that body politic which employs the official and as the holder of certain rights and duties which cannot be changed or interfered with except by general rulings of the supreme organs of the state. There are practical difficulties in strictly maintaining this 'revolutionary legality', as it is called in the U.S.S.R. Indeed, it is always difficult to prevent the discretion granted to state organs for the sake of efficiency getting out of the control of the supreme state organs established for preserving the stability of the existing legal order. But it would be wrong to say that such a control, in the U.S.S.R., did not exist: in fact it forms the established basis of Soviet legality.

There is, in the U.S.S.R., no balance of power in the usual sense, but there are counterweights against the purely administrative organs, based on the ruling party and the organs of 'public opinion' controlled by it. For the average citizen who feels himself injured there are various ways of bringing about redress by intervention from above. In the purely judicial field, and in all cases where administrative orders have been issued in clear contradiction to the law, there is the very elaborate machinery of supervision by the higher courts and by public attorneys who, as distinct from other continental countries, function not merely as organs of public prosecutions, but also as a guarantee for strict legality being observed by all state organs, and are allowed and obliged to protest to the higher courts against all illegal decisions of state organs. In the purely judicial field, the cassation of incorrect judgments can be demanded not only by the party injured, but also by the attorneys; the higher attorneys are also bound to appeal where the judgment seems to have injured the rights of the defence, or inflicted an unjust penalty upon the defendant. Even after a judgment has become valid, the proceedings can always be reopened by an order of the higher court. The President of the Supreme Court as well as the Attorney General are obliged to take the initiative in opening this special 'procedure by supervision', whenever they learn of a case incorrectly judged by the lower courts.

From the average citizen's point of view, at least as important as the remedies granted to him against clear illegality, are those he may use against measures that, although formally within the competence of the state organ, are deemed unjust. There is, first, the Press which, even if it does not publish a letter of complaint, is under a strict obligation to investigate the matter,<sup>11</sup> and to communicate the result to the authorities. Publication of the letter and of the results of the investigation can be

<sup>11</sup>For this purpose all papers have their special investigation departments. *Pravda*, for example, has many hundreds of employees for this purpose.

used as a means of pressure in a friendly intervention. There is, further, the enormous apparatus of the secretariat of the Presidents of the Union, as well as of those of the individual republics, which deal with hundreds of thousands of complaints. And there are the deputies of the new parliamentary bodies. Their direct election, without opposing candidates, may not do much to indicate the trends in public opinion, but it does create some direct connection between electors and elected, and an obligation on the part of the latter to act as advocates of the individual complaints of the former. This obligation is strongly stressed in official comment on the deputies' duties.

All these methods, of which we have mentioned only the most important, would, it is true, only act against individual mistakes or denial of justice by individual officials of the state. They would hardly help against an outbreak of mass hysteria such as may occur in any country, except in so far as they can help to hasten the inevitable reaction. In the beginning of 1938, after the excesses which were the result of the purges, very drastic proceedings were taken against people who had promoted hysterical sentiments and measures, although not until much harm had been done. No system in serious political danger—as the Soviet system certainly has been during its whole existence—can be expected to pay full regard to the rights of the individual. Once political suspicion intervenes, the guarantees against injustice, even to individuals quite innocent from the point of view of the régime, become less secure. In spite of the guarantees of the common law system, the U S A have had the Sacco-Vanzetti and the Tom Mooney cases. In any political system, once a case has become a political symbol, there is a great danger that it may be dealt with according to the political convictions of the people deciding it, rather than on its own merits. And a political situation like that of the U S S R during the pre war period does not encourage any state to take risks with possible enemies.

We are here not concerned with the undoubtedly great hardships very often connected with the working of the Soviet system, but with the principal standards according to which it tries to work. The events of 1938 prove that the U S S R tries to prevent the avowed discrimination against potential political opponents of the system interfering with their normal civic rights outside the political sphere, as long as they do not commit any crime. It may be assumed that expulsions, during the purges, from the ranks of the Communist Party were not supported unless the Central Committee of the Party believed it had good reason to suppose that the member expelled was at least likely to oppose the Party; or was inefficient or fighting its enemies. But it was stated, in express terms, that even people expelled from the Communist Party were not to be dismissed from their jobs, unless the job was such that it was essential for the man who did it to be a Party member. Even then the former Party member was not to be dismissed until another suitable job had been found for him. Of course, a really serious opponent of the régime would not have been able to take advantage of these regulations,

as he would probably have been imprisoned before or after having been dismissed from the Party. But the example proves that the régime, however strongly it reserves political power to its reliable supporters and prosecutes adversaries, tries to preserve for the mere non-conformist guarantees for his civil rights.

There is still another side of the problem of Soviet emergency justice that deserves to be taken into consideration. If a state is forced to grant its officials extraordinary powers, the only guarantee against misuse of such powers is the exemplary punishment of officials. Prior to 1940, Soviet military law demanded that the soldier obey only *lawful* commands of his superiors: he was allowed and obliged to resist illegal orders.<sup>65</sup> The intention of such legislation was, of course, to appeal to

<sup>65</sup>An international enactment of that kind would be required in order to create an honestly legal basis for the indictment of war crimes even if committed by orders from above apart from those certainly numerous cases where the criminal act was committed without direct pressure by superiors, or where the pressure was of the sort which a normally honest man could be expected to resist. A large number of difficulties would still remain: the knowledge of international law to be expected from the private soldier; proper assessment of actual opportunity to fulfil his legal obligation against his officers giving illegal commands (at least in cases where those officers are not individual cadets, but backed by their superiors as was the rule in Hitlerite Germany) etc. In the age of the atomic bomb I cannot find much sense in the distinction between 'war crimes' and legitimate war apart from the victor's hypocrisy, whilst obvious atrocities for which no excuse of alleged military necessity can be found, are frequently committed against the nationals of the fascist country and therefore remote from the victor's justice. There is only one 'war crime' that can be consistently defined: namely the establishment and the defence of political régimes the *raison d'être* of which is aggressive war and the defence of which demands systematic commission of atrocities (as distinct from horrible things that happen in every war as well as in every revolution independently of the leaders' intentions but are not in themselves necessary for success). For the definition as well as for the punishment of such a crime it is irrelevant whether the criminal has found opportunity of committing atrocities against citizens of a state that, later, proved its military superiority and, therefore, the right to punish 'war criminals' or at some early stage—after having supported atrocities merely against domestic Jews and Communists—has escaped to another country and written a book *I paid Hitler*. It is true, many actual culprits will be caught even by the method which has been chosen by the victors because of its less obvious connection with fundamental social issues upon which they disagree in building up special organizations which have to carry out certain atrocities, a fascist régime will prefer the employment of people who have already proved their suitability to carry out orders of that kind, and even to develop some imagination and initiative of their own. It would be completely mistaken to allow an S.S. man who by committing numerous atrocities against German Jews and Communists has qualified for membership in an organization committing atrocities against Russian or French civilians to escape from responsibility for the mere reason that, in the latter case, he acted in fact under superior orders. But it would also be mistaken to grant him extenuating circumstances for that reason.

The purely legal approach is bound to lead into insoluble contradictions when confronted with a *metajurist* fact such as the appearance of a political régime whose legality cannot be questioned except from a political point of view, yet which implies the legality of actions which to people not sharing the outlook of that régime, appears as legitimate as those of cobras and invites the treatment duly accorded to such reptiles. If consistently applied, the legal approach is bound to result in procedure like that followed in the Luneburg trial, where the defence was based on the legality of the régime of which the war-criminals were part. The actual argument in favour of applying judicial procedure in such cases, is the possibility of influencing potential fascists by suitable propaganda and to re-educate young people who have been influenced by fascist propaganda. But this argument excludes the very foundation of the legal approach which is the elevation to an absolute standard of the legal régime to which the defendant was subject at the time of committing his action.



the political consciousness of the soldiers against potential Bonapartist aspirations of their commanders such as were overcome in the Tukhachevsky crisis of 1937. The military code of 1940, like those of most other countries, demands from the soldier unconditional obedience to *all* commands of his superiors, and frees him from the responsibility for illegal acts he may commit in obeying such commands. But, as a compensation for the increased power of the officer, his responsibility for illegal orders given by him is increased, under martial law. So he has to bear the heaviest responsibility for actions of his inferiors, the illegal character of which the commanding officer could foresee when giving his order.<sup>66</sup> Evidently, it would be wrong to interpret the strictness of martial law against such offences by commanding officers as a restriction of the security of the Soviet citizen—on the contrary it works as a partial compensation for restrictions inevitable under military conditions. And this holds true for many aspects of the Soviet dictatorship.

In the problems of everyday civil life the Soviet legal system can stand comparison with other countries, if we concentrate upon the typical questions with which each system has to deal. The Soviet system of elected judges with appeal to higher courts deals very fairly with the average citizen who is unable to afford expensive counsel, and it deals with him so that he feels that justice is done, regardless of his personal social position. The Anglo-American system of trial by jury and learned counsel certainly has its merits in settling highly complicated disputes on inheritance or commercial rights, which can hardly arise in the U S S R,<sup>67</sup> and in preventing commercial competitors of a defendant influencing the decision in a bankruptcy case. If it gives the big monopoly some advantage as against the small firm which cannot afford high costs, the legal system is merely expressing essential features of the society it represents. The Soviet system, if applied to the typical capitalist issues mentioned above, would hardly avoid the reproach of political interference in commercial matters,<sup>68</sup> on the other hand, the average unmarried Russian mother, as long as she was dependent on alimony, was much better secured against evasions by the child's father (however expensive a counsel he might be able to afford) than her English sister. There is no sense in criticizing either legal system from the point of view of other social conditions than those for which it was conceived.

<sup>66</sup>See the article of Chukvadse in *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo* 1931, No. 4 especially pp. 73 ff.

<sup>67</sup>To speak more concretely, complicated issues in civil law can arise, in the U S S R, only between state enterprises, and for settling such disputes a special semi-judicial organ, the State Arbitrage, has been established. It takes its decisions with due consideration not only for the law, but also for the interest of the owner of both 'contesting' parties—the state and its planned economy. Of course these issues have little to do with the rights of the individual citizen, with which we are now here concerned.

<sup>68</sup>From the point of view of Soviet law this could not even be regarded as a reproach. Article 1 of the Civil Code explicitly states that the rights of private entrepreneurs (existing in 1922 when the Code was enacted) were recognized only in so far as the use made of these rights corresponded to the economic purpose for which these rights had been recognized, namely the development of the productive resources of the country.

It is another question whether the Soviet system succeeds in achieving that relative stability in the relations between the various organs of the ruling system which characterizes American or English law, in regulating the relations between various competing business concerns. The Soviet state uses the formula of 'revolutionary legality' to express its desire to achieve a similar degree of stability. But how far can a system that admittedly is dependent on a dominant group compel this group to maintain administrative stability, however desirable? So Stalin, reporting the new constitution to the Soviet Congress, in December 1936, justified the long list of administrative districts within the single Union Republics<sup>69</sup> by the very characteristic argument that it was necessary to prevent 'us' (i.e. a body presided over by himself) from changing the administrative boundaries as frequently as hitherto, and so disorganizing state administration to meet passing political needs. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of this wish. But, in fact, administrative boundaries were very commonly changed by decree between the enactment of the new constitution and the outbreak of the war, and the post factum approval of parliament may not have had all the stabilizing effect for which Stalin hoped. There is in a one-party system no brake but the self-restraint of the ruling group. What may work in favour of efficiency when quick decisions have to be taken may work the other way round when it seems desirable to avoid too quick decisions.

### (b) *The Functions of Soviet Law*

The Soviet state aims at stabilizing the relations between the citizens, as well as between the various bodies administering state-controlled enterprises, Soviet civil law has thus to regulate two different, although strongly interconnected, sets of social relations.<sup>70</sup> It has to regulate the relations between the private spheres of interest of the individual citizens and, especially, to protect their private property. This private sphere is the reward of the citizen's participation in national production, and a major stimulus to such participation. Soviet law has recognized private property including the right of inheritance, when NEP was introduced, but it has developed the protection of these rights in regard to the private citizen's personal fund of consumption goods and

<sup>69</sup>Apart from the enumeration of the autonomous republics and regions, which might be accepted as a guarantee of national autonomy by the federal Constitution.

<sup>70</sup>The practical application of this principle on a theoretically homogeneous legal system is bound to produce a number of difficulties, and much discussion as to whether the theoretical approach is to be taken from the private sphere (as with traditional civil law of bourgeois states) or from the application to state economics. See my article in *Modern Law Review*, December 1942, and my book *Soviet Legal Theory* published in the International Library for Sociology and Social Reconstruction, London, 1945.

precisely when private property in the means of production has been abolished.<sup>71</sup> The state no longer needs to reserve to itself the right to interfere with what forms the by-product, yet the main stimulus, of national production—the better the protection of the rights of the individual, the better the national production and therefore the accumulation of national wealth in the hands of the state. So, Soviet law protects the individual citizen not only against other citizens, but also against individual state organs with which he may have contractual relations. However omnipotent the state may be with regard to the individual, it has no wish to render the housing administration, although controlled by the state itself, omnipotent as regards the tenants, or to facilitate the uneconomic working of a state factory and the growth of discontent among the workers by allowing the management to pay the wages whenever it likes. The so-called *class clausulae* of the Civil Code, at the time of its enactment, were intended to prevent misuse of the recognized property rights for purposes of restoring capitalism.<sup>72</sup> Since the abolition of the NEP they merely serve to protect the citizen against being exposed to pressure. Legal transactions are invalid if one of the parties has been exposed to bewilderment or threats on behalf of the other (Art. 32), or, under duress, has acted to his evident detriment (Art. 33 of the Civil Code), and in cases when the injured person should be prevented by some cause from looking after his interests, social organizations, or the Public Attorney, are entitled to initiate, to continue, or to participate in Civil Law suits on his behalf. In all these ways Soviet Civil Law differs from that of any other state mainly in that it makes stronger attempts not only formally to recognize, but materially to secure the realization of the rights of the less powerful citizens, a tendency which is common to most of contemporary progressive legislation.

But there is another sphere, economically far more important, where the analogy with traditional civil law is merely formal. Experience has

<sup>71</sup>Characteristic is the attitude to inheritance. When admitted in 1922 it was kept within the limit of 10,000 roubles (£1,250) established by the War Communist legislation, and only in 1926 was that upper limit replaced by a system of progressive taxation. In 1929, during the offensive against the NEP, the scale of taxation was raised, but in the immediate pre-War period the maximum rate of tax on 45 per cent, started at 200,000 roubles—an amount socially corresponding to some £4,000 in this country. This was rather moderate, if measured by the standards of progressive administrations in other countries, although it must not be forgotten that Soviet legislation has only to deal with earned incomes, and that the circle of potential heirs is restricted to the nearest relatives: children, grandchildren and spouses. Other relatives participate in the estate only if they have been supported by the deceased during the last period of his life. Suggestions have been made by some Soviet lawyers to provide in the new Civil Code for wills in favour of parents, brothers and sisters, but the concept that persons other than the nearest relatives, a permanent connection with whom may be supposed, may benefit from inheritance is strange to any school of Soviet thought. During the war, the Inheritance Tax has been reduced to 10 per cent, but this measure should be interpreted in connection with the enormous losses in human life connected with War and enemy occupation which caused the State to refrain from severely taxing the next of kin of those who had given their lives for their country.

<sup>72</sup>See note 68.

shown that the best way to check the proficiency and regular working of the management of the state-owned enterprises is to regard them, juridically, as independent units, and since 1931 this principle has been generally applied. The units may be sued by each other or by the State Bank for their debts, or for the enforcement of delivery of goods as promised by contracts between them. The state, of course, retains the right to redispense of its property, if necessary, by redistributing the capital funds among its various organs. In practice, this right is exercised only after due care has been taken that the liabilities of a dissolved or amalgamated firm are covered by its successors. With litigation amongst its own organs, the state-owned enterprises,<sup>22</sup> the state does not interfere apart from, ultimately, having to pay the costs, should the liabilities of an enterprise prove to exceed its assets. When this happens, a change of management, if not a reconstruction of the whole industry, usually follows. The state has no wish to take from its judges the responsibility of deciding on the facts between the state-owned units. So there is a very broad sphere for the application of Soviet civil law, which in forms differs little from any other country's private law, although it regulates quite a different set of economic facts.

Soviet civil law not merely applies the categories of traditional civil law as developed in countries with private property in means of production, but has itself been developed during the period of the New Economic Policy, when in the U S S R a strong private-owned section existed and had to be controlled by civil law. So the theoretical question of the interpretation of Soviet law was strongly interwoven with the political question of the desirable relations between the Socialist and the private-capitalist section of the economic system, and with the further question whether, private ownership once abolished, there would be a place for law in Soviet society at all.

To tackle this problem has been one of the most interesting, and most difficult tasks of recent Soviet political theory.<sup>23</sup> The original conception of law, formed on the basis of the general criticism of the previous *bourgeois* society, had been very simple. Law had been conceived as a relic of *bourgeois* society, at best a temporarily necessary evil, bound 'to wither away' in a relatively short time, together with other instruments of class rule. One must not take such theories as mere abstract philosophies concerned with the distant future: during the period of the collectivization of agriculture it was suggested, quite seriously, that the functions of the local self-government body, the village Soviet, should be transferred to the new producers' co-operative, the *kolkhozes*, which was regarded as another and more advanced organization of the same people. It is quite clear that, had such proposals been carried out, the village

<sup>22</sup>We use the term for simplicity's sake—in fact the size of the economic units forming one juridical person is very different, according to their economic importance. In some cases a People's Commissariat (now Ministry), i.e. a whole industry, forms such a body, in other cases a single factory. See also note 67.

<sup>23</sup>For a more detailed review of the Soviet discussions on these problems see my works quoted above.

would have been freed from all except economic control by the state. Similarly the 'withering away of the law' in the relations between state-owned enterprises or trusts, would have meant reduction of their mutual contractual obligations to the level of moral, but not legally binding obligations, on exactly the same footing as for example an agreement to enter 'Socialist competition' between one Soviet worker and his mate on the bench. Such contracts, undoubtedly, are highly efficient propagandist devices to emphasize the country's interest in increased output. But no economy, whether private or state-controlled, can work unless there are other means besides propaganda of enforcing the fulfilment of mutual obligations between the enterprises constituting the system. For these reasons Soviet legal theory, today, rejects as detrimental to the State the theory of the 'withering away of the law' which, in various forms, had dominated Soviet jurisprudence for more than 15 years.

In the period of the NEP, the primitive conception of the 'withering away of the law' was elaborated into that held by the school of Pashukanis. It was said that law was a necessary, although one-sided, description of the relations between people whose intercourse took the form of the exchange of commodities on the market, and a recognition of their equality in this exchange. From this fundamental relation, according to that theory, the conception of law was reflected in all the other relations of the members of such a society, including their political relations. If legality of human relations was to be taken as of supreme value (a conception in any case not strange to the lawyer's mind), such a theory was bound to provide arguments against the abolition of private enterprise, and in particular against the reversal of the NEP, as involving the end of the rule of law in general.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, if the abolition of private production and of private exchange was to be accepted as an achievement from the Socialist point of view, it ought, according to Pashukanis' theory of law, to be understood in a rather anarchic way as a lawless society, at least as a society without any but technical regulations. Not only would production be disorganized by depriving the contracts between socialist enterprises of their binding force, but also the rights of the individual citizen to the fruits of his productive efforts would become very insecure. If private property and the law protecting it were regarded as essentially connected with the market, which is an institution Socialism tends to abolish, the protection of the intellectual's or the worker's savings would become as insecure as was the protection of the rights of private entrepreneurs at the end of the NEP. Therefore, if the new relations were to be legally sanctioned, the original theories of Soviet jurisprudence had to be dropped.

This is clear enough. But the old theories have not yet been replaced by more adequate ones. There is still a strong tendency to consider that Soviet civil law applies to the sphere of autonomy which the state grants to the individual citizen. While forming an adequate basis for the

<sup>14</sup>See Dobrin, 'Soviet Jurisprudence and Socialism', in *The Law Quarterly Review*, vol. 52 (1936), especially p. 423, and the present writer's publications above quoted.

protection of the citizen's personal rights, such a conception hardly deals with the problem which is economically most important, the relations between the various organs of the identical owner of all means of production. Amongst Soviet lawyers there is no longer disagreement on the point that none of these organs can exercise any rights of its own. They are mere administrators of parts of the joint fund of national property and their 'autonomy' is merely a device for efficient administration. Obvious difficulties are implied in the explanation of the legal transactions performed between such agents, and discussions still continue, but opinion seems to favour the theories that base law on the obligations of each partner in the contract towards the Socialist state. The rights of individual citizens are based upon a different concept of property, individual property in means of consumption, which is recognized in different articles of the Constitution, but there can be no doubt that these rights, too, depend essentially upon the continuous policy of the state. As we have seen, conditions in the U.S.S.R. make it probable that for a long time to come it will be in the interest of the state to protect these individual rights. Current Soviet legal opinion is rather inclined to advocate their extension in the new civil code, for example regarding the law of inheritance, the protection of the rights of the bona fide possessor and of individual claims for moral as distinct from material<sup>1</sup> satisfaction (say judicial recognition of priority rights of authors), etc. Soviet civil law, if founded simply upon the public interest, is likely to be a more enduring safeguard for the individual citizen than it would have been had it existed, as Pashukanis argued purely to protect the private producer of commodities, i.e. a member of society whose eventual disappearance was certain even when the theory was formulated.

In criminal law, too, Soviet ideology has changed. It now emphasizes the binding force of the new social standards, and no longer makes concessions to a relativist theory of ethics. Former Soviet criminology, in conformity with theoretical developments in many other countries, had a tendency to abandon the concept of 'guilt' with all its implications such as intention, negligence, attempt, complicity and so forth, and to replace clear juridical norms by general considerations about 'defending society'. The concept of punishment was dropped for it appeared to have lost its philosophical and moral foundations. Thereby not only was the moral stigma of the ex-prisoner (which had been the chief handicap in re-integrating him into society) dropped, but the law-breaker also ceased to be responsible towards society. Now Soviet jurists declare that not only fascism, but all the various 'sociological' schools of criminology, have by means of general phrases about protecting society abolished those legal guarantees which previous, more progressive systems had developed, especially the principle *nullo poena sine lege* (no punishment but prescribed by the law). The fascist practice of submitting the wrongdoer, after he has served his term as

<sup>1</sup>The latter, in form of damages, is granted of course by present Soviet civil law

prison, to an indefinite 'protective custody' in the concentration camp is the mere extreme application of a theory that drops the legal concept of punishment and intends to protect society by special prevention against further delinquencies of certain persons rather than by the general conviction that offences are followed by certain disagreeable consequences. As against those theories, already in the years immediately before the war the Soviet strongly emphasized not merely the educational, but also the preventive, character of the sanctions of criminal law.

A consequence of the interpretation of punishment as a measure for general prevention of crime is the principle that no violation of the law should remain unpunished whatever consideration may be given to the special circumstances of the individual case in determining the punishment. As—some extreme cases of treason apart—punishment in the U S S R is regarded not as a stigma, but as a re-educational measure, it could be applied in cases where other states would refrain from it. By the law of 7 April, 1935,<sup>74</sup> normal jurisdiction by the general courts replaced, in cases of theft, assault, bodily injuries, murder or attempt to murder, the purely educational organs that, according to original Soviet legislation, had to deal with juvenile delinquents from 12 to 16 years. Probation or commendation to a public organization specially charged with the care of young people who are in trouble is still the typical procedure in cases of theft. Juvenile delinquents charged with serious crimes, or inclined to recidivism, have to serve their terms of imprisonment in public educational institutions. It was thought that even a mere admonition spoken by a judge who can order more serious penalties is likely to be taken more seriously than a talking to from the 'charity-aunt', as the educational officer was called amongst the youths with which she had to deal. It was believed, too, that the discipline in the educational homes would improve if it was made clear that the home was an alternative to imprisonment which the judge was bound to order should the educational home fail. But the most important purpose of the legislation of 1935 was the desire to eradicate the practice of adult criminals using children and juveniles, not subject to the sanctions of criminal law, as their tools in organized criminal activities. Any encouragement of children and juveniles, by adults, to criminal activities, to prostitution, etc., is threatened, by the same law, with imprisonment not under five years, like the grave forms of murder.

A very characteristic symptom of the stronger emphasis on legal order as well as of the preservation of some essential features of traditional Soviet criminal policy was a peculiar 'movement' initiated in the spring of 1937. Some hundreds of Moscow's 'professional criminals' wrote letters to *Izvestia* asking what punishment they would receive if they

<sup>74</sup>In passing we should mention that distortions of that law implying the application of capital punishment against juveniles, as current in anti-Soviet propaganda, are refuted by the very structure of the Soviet criminal code. The meaning of the decree, as interpreted below, emanates very clearly from detailed authoritative prescriptions by the Supreme Court.

surrendered themselves to justice, so as to be able to return to normal civic life. The public prosecutor answered the letters in a series of articles. In severe cases he promised only that voluntary surrender would constitute an extenuating circumstance. This was, however, enough to bring the bulk of the letter writers, together with hundreds of their fellows, into the prosecutor's consulting room and so before the courts. The clients evidently knew that, in the majority of cases, the fact that they had voluntarily surrendered would mean that they would be able to obtain papers and employment,<sup>77</sup> without any but formal punishment, and that even in cases where imprisonment was inevitable a man who had voluntarily surrendered would obtain an early reprieve and rehabilitation. Interesting, from our point of view, is that a 'movement' of this kind was still possible in 1937. It would have been impossible had not the criminals themselves—not merely some legal theorists—been quite convinced that, in spite of all the increased stress on legality, two essential principles of traditional Soviet criminal policy still held good, first that the punishment should not be decided from the formal description of the crime, but after consideration of the extent to which the criminal is still to be regarded as a danger to society, secondly, that the former criminal, once he has served his term, or earned his reprieve, will obtain full civic rehabilitation. Now that the former, relativist conceptions of crime have been abandoned, these two principles will remain the essential contribution of Soviet experience towards the solution of a highly complicated sociological problem.

The continued re-educational approach even to the most serious aspects of non political crime<sup>78</sup> should not be interpreted as to imply some 'withering away' of criminal prosecutions. Since, in a country with full employment, the threat of disciplinary dismissal had lost any sharpness and freedom to change employment had to be abolished under the immediate pressure of the pre War situation, many rules formerly enforced by the management had to be included in the Penal Code in order to provide efficient sanctions, and even to prevent persons who intended to change employment from intentionally provoking dismissal. Since June 26, 1940, leaving employment without permission (which has to be granted in certain cases prescribed by the law) is punishable by terms of imprisonment from two to four months, whilst repeatedly being late or drunk at work, instead of the formerly threatened dismissal, invites some months of 'forced labour at the

<sup>77</sup>It ought to be remarked besides that this drive coincided with the increased campaign against the danger of foreign espionage. The Soviet, of course, had every interest in clearing the underworld of people hiding merely for some theft or robbery. On the other hand the likelihood that use of falsified papers would in future be taken more seriously might have contributed to the readiness of the average 'professional criminal' to abandon a way of life the risks of which were likely to increase.

<sup>78</sup>As late as 1939 Vishinsky polemized against suggestions of applying the long terms of imprisonment (up to 25 years) as against the 10-years maximum established in the Penal Code) which in 1938 had been introduced for counter revolutionary crimes to the more serious cases of murder—that crime, he deemed should be fought by the progress of Communist education, not by increased repression.



place of employment', that is to say, compulsory deduction of up to 25 per cent. of the earnings as a fine. By the Decree of August 10, 1940, criminal responsibility was introduced for small scale thefts or hooliganism committed in the factories which formerly had been dealt with by disciplinary action by the management, in some Republics, such as Georgia, by factory fellowship courts. The fact that small-scale 'criminal records' of such a type are bound to become nearly as common as are 'bad marks' in the disciplinary records of soldiers in most armies, is bound to work against the ideological tendency, implied in the stabilization of the new society, of associating some moral stigma with conviction in court. With the passing of the memories of the time when the new order itself was a contested issue, whoever opposes its foundations is bound to be regarded as a mere scoundrel and hostile agent, deserving punishment, but within the framework of the new society itself, though Soviet Criminal Law becomes more important as an agency enforcing the desired standards of behaviour, it cannot cease to be regarded, and to work, as an essentially educational agency.

*(c) The Constitutional Rights of the Soviet Citizen*

The Soviet constitution grants certain fundamental rights which are not to be found in the constitution of any other country: rights which are generally thought to be part of a Socialist organization of society. The most important of these is the 'right to work', specified in Article 118 of the Constitution as 'the right to guaranteed employment with payment for the work done in accordance with its quantity and quality'. The evident meaning of this double statement is that the Soviet state undertakes to maintain full employment while regulating the access to various occupations by offering higher payment for work harder, less agreeable, or demanding special skill and professional preparation. This method of regulating the access to the various occupations is essentially different from the various fascist or semi fascist conceptions of the 'right to work', in return for compensation decided by political and 'educational' standards, but not by the citizen's contribution to the national wealth (which, in most of these cases, is nothing). The 'right to work' is, in theory, recognized by some fascist states. Such recognition, in any state with private control of the economically relevant opportunities of employment, does not imply work at normal wages as regulated by the labour market but some substitute for it should the worker fail to obtain employment in privately owned industries. The substitute may vary from quite pleasant camps for young men and women to the concentration camp. The latter, certainly, exists in the U S S R, too, in the shape of the labour colonies of the N K V D. Certainly, the work there done, in the shape of forestry, new water communications, etc., is more productive than the work done even in the less barbaric of the fascist concentration camps. But nobody in the U S S R regards forced labour as a fulfilment of the promised

'right to work' Prior to the legislation of 1939-40 which was evidently dictated by the immediate needs of war economy, the right to work included the free choice of the citizen between the most various kinds of employment—all offered, it is true, by the same employer, the state. Since 1940, no change of the place of employment without the consent of the management is permitted. But still the choice between the different callings is free and so also is the choice of the first employment (or the second in cases of doctors, pupils of the new technical schools, and some other professions where the state demands some years' service in a job selected by it, in compensation for free education) Even in war time, the state did not direct anyone to any kind of job except at the normal rate of wages.

The 'right to education' as well as the 'right to leisure' are essentially complements to the fundamental 'right to work'. 'Payment according to quality of labour', i.e. differentiation of income according to professional preparation, would involve social injustice unless there were equal chances for any boy or girl to achieve the highest qualification that his or her abilities allow. And without sufficient leisure the right to work under a monopolist employer who, since the laws of 1938 and 1940, can forbid any change of employment, might easily mean abolition of any kind of personal freedom.

But these supplementary rights are essentially declaratory, they only paraphrase principles of the Soviet conception of social labour. The guarantee of the right to work as quoted in Article 118 of the Constitution, the Socialist organization of production, could not be abolished without destroying the foundations of the Soviet state. But at least two of the concrete measures quoted in the Articles 119 and 121 as real guarantees of the rights to education and to leisure<sup>79</sup> were abolished in 1940, obviously partly in connection with preparation for war. One is forced to the conclusion that the 1936 constitution is a description of the political principles of the Soviet state, not a 'fundamental law' in the American sense.<sup>80</sup>

Such an interpretation of the Constitution would not, as many an enthusiastic supporter of the U.S.S.R. may believe, impair its historical importance, but rather enable one to look at it from the correct angle. Our interpretation would put the 1936 Constitution into line with the Declaration of Rights, the American Declaration of Independence, and the French Rights of Man. Each one accomplished much although not all their promises were realized. If we are to be just to Soviet policy during these critical years we must not claim achievements all of which have not been maintained, but simply state that the development of the international crisis, with its repercussions on the internal life of the U.S.S.R., has prevented the realization of hopes that there were good

<sup>79</sup>The seven hour day and free education, including the universities.

<sup>80</sup>The continental interpretation of written constitutions varies: the long catalogue of civic rights and duties that headed the Weimar Constitution was interpreted, also by the Supreme Court, as a description of the direction of future legislation, but not as actual law invalidating all contradicting laws and administrative orders.

reasons to cherish even in 1936 Under normal conditions, with a less urgent need to make the maximum possible use of all available labour at the most urgent point, and with less dangers involved in fluctuation of labour, the U S S R could very well have continued her reconstruction while preserving the seven hour day, free education, and freedom to change the place of employment. Certainly, under conditions of no unemployment, the last mentioned freedom involves a strong pressure brought to bear upon the managements in the sense of satisfying all justifiable demands of the workers But, apart from the need to hurry the preparations for war, there was no imminent reason why a state that had succeeded in securing full employment could not satisfy the housing, etc., demands of the average worker in a degree sufficient to prevent him from changing his job more frequently than is compatible with the efficiency of work and also no urgent reason for so speeding up the industrialization of the country that a real shortage of labour arose, thus confronting managements with the alternatives of either satisfying all possible demands of labour or restricting its freedom to move from one employment to another <sup>80</sup>

We must therefore describe the political rights of the Soviet citizen given in the 1936 Constitution as an enumeration of political principles rather than as an accomplished reality Much injustice has been done to the U S S R by quite friendly attempts to read into the Constitution something it does not contain, and was never intended to contain Freedom of the Press, freedom of public meetings, etc., are granted 'in order to strengthen the Socialist system', and Article 126 of the Constitution, in very clear terms,<sup>81</sup> enacts the one party system, and the claim of this party to the dominant rôle in the state Therefore the Party alone must be expected to decide what public utterances, and particularly what kind of public criticism, are likely to strengthen Socialist society and what, if permitted, would more probably weaken it This means that the political rights of the citizen are in fact restricted to the right to participate in the work of Socialist reconstruction This includes the right to constructive criticism under the guidance of the Party, and the right to join the Party for those qualified to do so This, indeed, has become much easier since 1939 for all people, independent of their social origin But the one-party system means further that the elections to the newly established parliamentary bodies are not elections

<sup>80</sup>It seems to me an open question whether, even under normal conditions, a Socialist state which secures full employment could manage without some privileges granted to the worker who stays for a longer period in his place of employment as were introduced, in the field of social insurance by the Soviet law of December 1938 as an intermediary step before the full abolition of the right to quit employment without consent of the management It might be said that prior to 1938, the U S S R had somehow managed without such privileges enacted in law But in actual administrative practice they were never lacking especially in view of the difficult housing conditions

<sup>81</sup>Nearly all existing written constitutions, even if the respective country is ruled according to strict party lines hardly mention the existence of that most essential element of the actual constitution This fact affords a number of opportunities for fascist demagoguery to inveigh against party rule in democratic countries, i.e. against the existing forms of democracy

in the ancient sense of the British Constitution, in which the electorate decides between various contending candidates. Nor are they elections in the sense of present-day British constitutional reality, i.e. in the sense of being a decision between the policy of competing parties. Indeed, should the introduction of a multi party system in the U.S.S.R. be desired at a later stage, as is highly improbable, the present constitutional provisions for nominating candidates would be a very inconvenient way of reintroducing a plurality of parties into Soviet life. As no candidate nominated by an individual factory or an individual *kolkho*s would have any chance of obtaining a majority in a constituency with 200,000 electors the only likely form of electoral struggle would be a contest between the big organizations, trade unions and agricultural co-operatives. Such a revival of class parties would inevitably have detrimental results for that political alliance which, hitherto, has formed the solid basis of all the achievements of the U.S.S.R.

There has been only one attempt to prepare for an electoral contest, under the 1936 Constitution, against the Communist Party. This attempt was made, in open breach of the law,<sup>82</sup> by some ecclesiastical organizations and resulted in what was called, abroad, 'the religious persecutions of 1937-8'. In fact the arrests of some ecclesiastics who had attempted to organize an ecclesiastical political party had nothing to do with religion. From the point of view of any Soviet politician the interest which some bishops took in church candidates in political elections was quite sufficient proof that they were not merely intending to realize the constitutional freedom of worship, but were organizing a 'white' political party. Under Soviet conditions an ecclesiastical party could only be a counter revolutionary party. Some people might interpret Christianity in a 'white' political sense, but it seems to me highly illogical if such people spoke of the U.S.S.R. as their 'ally' in the war. Churchmen, in this country or in the U.S.A., who are really interested in the welfare of the U.S.S.R., and in the freedom of religious life in that country, will strengthen<sup>83</sup> amongst their religious Russian friends those tendencies which aim at reconciliation with the new order by supporting the work of social reconstruction done by the Soviet, without hoping to see the Disestablishment Laws repealed at any time. Once these tendencies definitely dominate Russian ecclesiastical life—and we are to see<sup>84</sup> that they made enormous progress during the war—the Disestablishment Laws can and will be applied in a sense fully satisfying all *spiritual*, as distinct from social and political, interests.

<sup>82</sup>The law of 1929 prohibits even private welfare activities of the churches, as competing with the public ones, and strictly limits legal church activities to the organization of worship. The fact that, during the discussion of the 1936 Constitution, some people in the U.S.S.R. even mentioned a 'question' of ecclesiastical candidacies (as distinct from the doubtless legal candidacies of individual churchmen if proposed by other organizations) seems to me merely a symptom of the confusion then prevailing.

<sup>83</sup>Highly impressive documents adopting this attitude were the letters exchanged between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the then Metropolitan of Moscow (later Patriarch) Sergey; see *The Times*, 15 October, 1942.

<sup>84</sup>See pp. 16, ff.

We have anticipated a question to be dealt with more thoroughly in a later chapter because of its value in demonstrating the political implications of any multi party system in the U S S R, at least in the present stage of her development. From the point of view of democracy the one party system has evident shortcomings. The present writer, himself a convinced Socialist, would prefer Socialism to come, in his own country, if possible by the co-operation of several parties representing distinct sectional interests. But after all that has happened in the U S S R., the one-party system is the only sustainable method for consolidating the revolutionary achievements. Therefore, what democratic self government there is, is only what is compatible with the one party system.

It is not quite so little as the critic may believe. Self criticism—and even in such perilous times as the last war—is much encouraged. Although freedom of election to supreme political bodies may be questionable, there is real freedom of election to the various bodies immediately influencing the citizen's life: to the Factory Committee of the Trade Union, to the Administrative Board of the *kolkhos* or the co-operative, and, for Party members, to the various organs of the Party caucus in factory and village. Secret ballot for all these elections was introduced in 1937, just at the moment when the régime was forced to shoot its own generals. If any other proof were needed after the experiences of the last war, this fact alone would suffice to demonstrate that, during the purges, Stalin had the support of the great majority of the people, though not of the majority of the old Party intelligentsia. No one, during the discussions of 1925-7, had dared to ask for the secret ballot in factory and village and this for a very simple reason. There was, then, no certainty at all whether any of the contending *Communist* factions would win in a free election—or some counter revolutionary group using this opportunity. But in 1937 Stalin believed that it would be wise to appeal against sabotaging factory managers and their backers in the trade union and Party committees to the secret ballot of the masses. Events proved that he was right, although his past record did not encourage any illusions that his success would bring a bed of roses for the individual citizen. It meant security, if not for all the individual achievements of the Revolution—Stalin, as we have seen, did away with quite a number of them—at least for the most essential achievement of all, the Socialist Fatherland. For its defence he could win the necessary support, whoever his rivals.

It may be doubtful whether the Soviet citizen could easily advocate a 'general line' as policies which differed from that of the Party. There is no doubt that for the execution of the general line, and, therefore, its application to the everyday life of the people, the Party depends upon the voluntary collaboration of a huge number of 'politically active citizens'. The extent to which the determination of high policy is democratic may be questionable—not only in the U S S R., if all the implications of the '*continuity of Foreign Policy*', which seems to be

established in this country, are considered. But in the traditional British sense of local self-government there is in the U.S.S.R. probably a higher degree of democracy than in most other countries. It is quite true that these millions of individuals represent merely a certain trend in political feeling—but did British juries and magistrates, at the time when the term 'self-government' was coined, represent more than such a trend, and that within a much narrower class? Support of the policy of the Party is a condition for participation in self government. But, provided that the majority of the citizens support this policy, as a huge majority in the U.S.S.R. certainly does, any call on their initiative and activity in carrying through this policy will be taken as an evidence that their state is truly democratic. The policy is determined from above. But the average citizen who supports the 'general line' of the state's policy will demand freedom to criticize not this line itself but the way in which it is realized by the organs of the state with which he personally has to deal. And this freedom he has. There is no doubt that the average citizen, if he so desires, has a very strong influence on the formation and on the working of these organs and is even urged to join them.

In consequence of the huge dimensions of the country the number of people participating in local self-government is enormous. In the elections of the regional, district and local administrations, at the end of 1939 1·68 million representatives were to be elected apart from some 3·4 millions working as elected 'People's Assessors' to the courts, as voluntary collaborators in the various departments of the local Soviets, etc. There are, further, in the villages 2·3 million members of the administrative boards of the *kolkhozes*. Amongst the industrial workers there are nearly as many rank and file organisers of the trade unions and of the various voluntary organizations, most of which had been established in peacetime in order to prepare civil defence. In all there must be more than 10 million citizens who take an active part in political life.

One has only to read a Soviet newspaper file to see what a source of strength the conception of active citizenship is in times of supreme national danger. During the war *Pravda* discussed the progress of the general military training and critically commented on it daily not as though it were the prerogative of special officers of the state, but as the business of any ordinary organizer of the trade unions or the Young Communist League. You might read of the successes and failures in mobilizing voluntary nurses in this or that district, or in transferring factories to the east of the Union. All this, evidently, can only be done because people consider public business as their own affair. This fundamental fact lies at the root of the Russian victories. All those who speak of the U.S.S.R. merely as of a 'dictatorship' could not but fail to understand it. No wonder that they failed properly to estimate the real resources of the U.S.S.R.

It is a different question whether some progress from the already achieved concept of democracy will be possible at some later stage. The Russians are the last to deny this, even in writings intended to assert

the merits of their system as compared with others which claim a monopoly of 'democracy' <sup>85</sup>

Some people in the Western countries who deplore the alleged lack of democracy in the U S S R are actually deploring the lack of possibilities of overthrowing the established socio-economic system by legal means. But no state grants such possibilities, and in *this* sense every state is a 'dictatorship' <sup>86</sup>. Those limitations of democratic procedure may be expressed by constitutional conventions, moral obligations to protect all legitimate interests of the minority (which may include the basic institutions of society), to preserve the continuity of foreign policy (which may involve excluding the possibility of changing sides in the great social issues of the time), etc., with the subordination of a powerful minority to the decisions of the majority conditioned upon the observation of these taboos. They may be expressed by honest statements that 'natural rights' which include the basic foundations of capitalist society stand above formal and constitutional law and that the capitalists are entitled to disregard the latter once the former are violated by a Socialist majority, <sup>87</sup> or that certain political rights are granted 'in order to strengthen the Socialist system' <sup>88</sup>. All these are mere details of state ideology and legislative technique, even the British electorate has no actual power to introduce the socio-economic system of the U S S R. The fact that the latter still preserves and strengthens the one party system is a mere expression that it still regards the fundamental function of every state—preservation of the foundations of its socio-economic system—as so predominant that all other considerations should be subordinated to that fundamental task.

There are sound reasons, from the standpoint of the Soviet state, for its continued rejection of any alternative to the one party system <sup>89</sup> in the present situation. After the destruction of the two aggressors which threatened its western and eastern borders and since the dominant countries of the world have capitalist systems, the phrase 'capitalist encirclement' corresponds to a stronger reality than ever since the days of Intervention, especially as no power outside the U S S R enjoys complete independence from the strongest and most conscious of the capitalist countries. The tactical position may have improved by moving the western defence belt from the Dvina to the Elbe, from the Dniestr to the Adriatic Sea, and the south-eastern from the Amur to the Yellow Sea, but the strategical position of one fifth of the world opposed by four fifths may be worse than that of the 'sixth' so often spoken of as confronted by potential opponents, entangled though they were in the sharpest mutual contradictions. Until some equilibrium, with due allowance for the advantages of defence, is achieved <sup>90</sup> the still weaker of

<sup>85</sup>Cf the article 'Democracy' in *War and the Working Class*, 1945 No. 9

<sup>86</sup>See p. 67

<sup>87</sup>Cf Melver, *Leviathan and the People*, pp. 160 ff

<sup>88</sup>See p. 87

<sup>89</sup>See pp. 32-3

<sup>90</sup>See pp. 135-6

the two systems can feel no sense of security. Therefore it cannot risk having issues important for its eventual defence—and in the times of total war every issue important for the electorate is also important for defence—decided by other considerations than those of defence, which will be best judged by the specialists. Even issues so popular with the electorate as, say, a big housing programme for the U S S R could hardly allow for decision simply according to the tastes of the prospective consumers apart from the needs, say, of dispersal as a means of civil defence.

To speak of the possibility of widening the scope of democratic decision in the U S S R involves discussing the possibilities of progress from the present limited freedom of the average citizen to influence the selection of the personnel by whom the 'general line' is carried through and to discuss the details of its application to the decision of such issues within the 'line' itself which have a general application yet are highly controversial from the standpoint of conflicting interests within the electorate. The British electorate is not free to carry out wholesale nationalization without compensation, to introduce a monopoly of foreign trade or even to support a pro Soviet foreign policy in opposition to the U S A., but it is free to decide between nationalization of mines with collaboration of private business and existing managers, and state-supervised organization of the mines by the mine-owners themselves. Similarly, it might appear desirable that, say, the Soviet matrimonial legislation of July 1944, which decided most important issues in the average Soviet citizen's life, should have been submitted to a free decision of the electorate after thorough discussion of the pros and cons of the various conceivable solutions. Various possible types of matrimonial legislation are theoretically compatible with state socialism as existing in the U S S R., just as various ways of controlling mines are compatible with that permeation of free capitalist enterprise by state capitalism which is characteristic of present-day Britain. Unhappily, only one of the possible types of Soviet matrimonial legislation can be the most suitable to keep the birth rate at the level needed for the preservation of the independence of the U S S R. under the given circumstances. After having concluded a huge war victoriously, but with enormous sacrifices of the flower of its youth, the U S S R. finds itself more than ever before confronted with a world united under a different system. Amongst its neighbours, and conceivable opponents, is the nation with the largest numbers and the highest population surplus in the world. So there is no chance of establishing equilibrium unless the U S S R. succeeds in quickly raising the population of Siberia, say, to American standards. The type of matrimonial legislation necessary for that purpose does not necessarily coincide with the material interest of the majority of the electorate, or even their conception of cultural standards. Therefore, it cannot be left to its free decision. The same holds true, in an even higher degree, whenever the priorities of butter (or housing) against guns (or means to counter the atomic bomb) are



in question. To proclaim the 'peace-making' activities of the last-mentioned weapon, monopolized in the hands of a conceivable opponent of the U S S R, and, at the same time, to reproach the latter for keeping its political system and that of its allies in a shape needed in order to meet the threat, is, to put it mildly, illogical.

## *Socialism in one Country and Soviet Patriotism*

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### *(a) National Reconstruction and Internationalism*

SOME READERS WILL HAVE remarked that we have already described the essential features of Soviet society of today, without mentioning a question which most foreign observers consider the most important of all, that of 'nationalism versus internationalism'. There are various opinions on this question but all agree in the assumption that such a juxtaposition in itself helps one to understand the development of the Russian Revolution. Communist critics abroad believe that the Russian Revolution must further 'World Revolution'. The Trotskyist contends that Stalin's Russia has failed to fulfil this 'essential' task, while the Stalinist says that it has succeeded. *Bourgeois* critics, including those who describe their own country's foreign policies as furthering 'progress', 'democracy', 'Christian civilization', believe that it is a crime for the Russians to further revolutionary movements abroad, those who oppose the maintenance of friendly relations between their country and the U.S.S.R. contend that the U.S.S.R. has committed this 'crime'. Others who strive for international collaboration with the U.S.S.R. say that this is not the case or, at least, has ceased to be so. This latter group agrees with the Trotskyists in acknowledging the fundamental fact that the Soviet pursues a national Russian policy, they disagree merely on whether this is a crime (from the point of view of international Communism) or a merit (from that of Conservative nationalists in various countries). In fact it is neither. The Soviet could not, at any point of its history, pursue any but a Russian<sup>1</sup> policy, nor could it, at any time down to the present, forget that its security, threatened by class antagonism abroad, may be increased if progressive and friendly governments are in power in other countries. Should any responsible politician in the U.S.S.R. forget this elementary truth for a moment, a glance into the journals published every month in such allied countries as the U.S.A. or the U.K. would suffice to remind him of it.

Now that whole alleged contradiction between the 'world-revolutionary' and the national approach is based upon a certain ideological assumption which is evident only to left wing ideologists who reached their conclusions during World War I, but not from the standpoint of historical experience, even interpreted in the Marxist sense. In order that actual divergencies between the interest in combining revolutionary movements in diverse countries and the specific, national inter-

<sup>1</sup>We use here, of course the term *Russian* as describing the national interests of the various peoples inhabiting the former Russian Empire not the specific interests of the Great Russian nationality.

ests of each of them can arise, there must be something like a 'world revolution' simultaneous at least in a number of leading countries. Actually, nothing of this kind can be found on the record of past transformations of human society. There have been the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, but only in the sense of parallel national movements sharing some intellectual intercourse and political sympathies. The outcome of the Reformation was a plurality of strongly differing Protestant Churches. So far as the Counter-Reformation had specific results of its own (the unity of the Roman Church was a pre-Reformation fact and had resulted from the fact that the Western Roman Empire was one of the units of late ancient civilization, as distinct from the East-Roman, Persian, Indian and Chinese ones), these were shown as French, Austrian, etc., variations of the Roman Catholic pattern. Whatever mutual sympathies existed between the parallel movements did not even prevent them from waging war against each other: the English against the Dutch, the French against the Hapsburgs. The bourgeois liberal movement between the American and the March 1917 (Kerensky) Russian revolutions has lasted for nearly 150 years. Therefore internecine wars of the above mentioned type have been avoided: it is possible, not to explain, but to describe any major war of that period in which bourgeois democratic countries participated as one in which they were rallied on one side and opposed to feudal or semi-feudal régimes on the other. It is the great promise of international Socialism that the process of all-human, social issues superseding regional interests will proceed further, thus is to say that the planned society to come will operate upon governments originating from popular movements (planning by authoritarian government divorced from those dynamic forces of society would be no Socialism) and that the common interests of its supporters in large-scale planning and in avoiding wars will be able to overcome differences of regional interest, and allow for a gradual integration of the national or multi-national units into some ultimate world-wide federation. To associate a more far-reaching meaning is impossible with the term 'world-revolution' for an historian—as distinct from a Utopian revolutionary who simply wishes all his ultimate aims to be realized in his own days. But the very fact that a revolution has succeeded in one country proves that it was led by people who were more than Utopians. In short: the hope that from the social transformations of our time a higher degree of integration of international society will result, and the fact that in this—as in all former attempts at social reconstruction—there is some mutual sympathy and community of interest between those who are engaged in them in various countries, is no answer to the historical fact that this transformation, like all its predecessors, exists and is bound to exist in national realizations. To thwart them in the name of 'internationalism'<sup>21</sup> means simply to thwart

<sup>21</sup>The opposite ideological process consists of claims for the international validity of national realizations, the original Communist concept of an international revolution being one of these. It is not so obvious in every case that specific national traits

reality for the sake of Utopian thought. The Russian revolution was led by men who kept strictly to revolutionary theory—but only as a guide to practical action, to transforming the actual world.

There has been no period of the Russian Revolution when important decisions—I speak of actual political and strategical decisions, not of phraseology—were dominated by considerations of 'World Revolution', as distinct from considerations of the Russian Revolution. One might expect evidence of such a policy in the early years of the Revolution, during the Civil War and the Intervention. A very competent and not unfriendly critic<sup>1</sup> has recently described these years as an 'internationalist aberration'. But, in fact, when in the spring of 1919 Kolchak approached the hulwarks of the Russian Revolution from the East, all available military reserves were thrown against him. This decision implied the abandonment of all hope of saving the Hungarian Soviet revolution. Trotsky opposed it, but from considerations of purely inner Russian strategy. Trotsky's opposition had no effect. In October 1920, when the Poles had defeated a small section of the Red Army, a preliminary peace was concluded with them on very unfavourable terms, in order to be able to finish with Wrangel quickly. The latter was never a serious threat to the Soviet regime, but by the mere fact of prolonging the Civil War he prevented the beginning of the reconstruction which was so sadly needed. It is true that, some months before, in July 1920, Lenin had ordered the pursuit of the defeated Poles beyond Warsaw, with the evident intention of establishing a Polish Soviet. But in March 1920 he himself had proposed to the Poles conditions of peace even more favourable than those they were later to obtain in the peace of Riga. So far from the Russians starting the war out of missionary zeal it was Pilsudski backed by Western Conservatives, who provoked it with a frivolity only paralleled by the Japanese in 1941. Once the Polish invasion had been defeated it seemed good Russian policy to replace the Pilsudski government by one more friendly and reliable, all considerations of international working-class solidarity apart. Few Communist or non Communist governments would have let such an opportunity slip. Trotsky, generally supposed to be a supporter of the 'internationalist' point of view, then opposed Lenin's policy on purely military grounds, as did also Stalin who was already Trotsky's chief antagonist. Lenin got his way—but his own argument was mainly based on Russian security which would be improved with a friendly govern-

condition the recognition of a system as Socialism. For example there is Mr Attlee's statement (in his speech of May 4 1946) that the nationalization of a country's economy without the preservation of those civic freedoms regarded as normal in Britain, is not Socialism but collectivism. From a sociologist's point of view this is merely another way of saying that Socialism is inconceivable except in Britain, some of its Dominions and a few North West European countries where historical conditions allowed not only for the rise of the ideological concept, but also for the realization of those freedoms demanded by Mr Attlee as an essential condition for Socialism. Such narrow definitions of Socialism imply either the denial of its possibility in those countries where its alleged conditions are not realized, or the demand for the international enforcement of certain national patterns.

<sup>1</sup>Professor Paris in *The Fortnightly* March 1942.

ment in Warsaw replacing the Pilsudskian adventurers. It seems quite impossible to find a single case of any importance where Russian national interests have been sacrificed to merely ideological international interests. The Russian revolutionaries could not, even if they would, attempt ideological adventures.

On the other hand, they were really interested in international revolutionary movements, as the representatives of other great revolutions, prior to 1917, had been. A great revolution, such as the Russian Revolution, differs from an internal convulsion as described in one day's headlines as 'Revolution in X land' essentially in that it has grown out of conditions prevailing in all leading countries in varying degree. It therefore attempts in some degree to realize the ideas stirring in the minds of all progressive men and women in every country. Such a revolution is bound to be influenced by the thoughts and sentiments of other nations which have contributed to shaping these ideas. Also it will appeal to sympathizers abroad precisely because it realizes their ideals to a greater or less degree. Thus it was in the English Civil War, with Protestantism and the movement for religious toleration, thus in the eighteenth century American and French Revolutions with all liberal and democratic ideas. And thus it is, in the twentieth century Russian Revolution, with Socialism. The foreigner who sympathizes with the idea which inspires the revolution will hope for the success of the state which it sets up, not because he is not a loyal citizen of his own country, but because this success proves the practicability of ideals the realization of which he deems to be desirable in the interest of his own people, so that he can no longer be laughed at as Utopian. For just the same reason the Conservatives who, in their own countries, oppose the new ideas will do all in their power—and their power in such cases is great—to prevent the success of an idea they abhor, even if it succeeds only abroad. There is no guarantee that if successful it will remain entirely abroad.

If there were any difference between our time and earlier centuries, it would lie in the fact that the influence of political ideals on international policy is today greater and more persistent than it has ever been before. Twenty years after the Bolshevik revolution the Spanish civil war was, in fact, an international civil war as well as a struggle for power between national factions and between the Great Powers behind them. In so far as it was an international civil war, it was a struggle on the issues put on the order of the day by the October Revolution of 1917. It would not be easy to find as distinct an example of international class struggles twenty years after 1642 or 1789. Although the Russian Revolution did not produce a world revolution, and although the pilots sent to Spain by Stalin's Russia certainly fought to prevent fascist aggression against their fatherland rather than to spread the ideas of the Soviet Revolution, it cannot be doubted that this revolution has had a far greater influence abroad than the English civil war or the French or American Revolutions.

In the Spanish civil war the fascist powers intervened with the intention of securing a most valuable strategic position by profiting from the political bias of French and British Conservatives. The Russians, on the other side, gave help to the Spanish Republicans in the hope of gaining military experience in fighting their probable adversaries as well as support amongst Western progressive opinion. One must not overstate the force of ideological factors when they are in conflict with immediate national interests. Hitler succeeded in Spain and at Munich, but he failed with the Hess mission. In 1939 the Russians embarked on the war against Finland in order to secure the defence of Leningrad, without bothering much about the opinion of the Western labour movement. Western Conservatives tried to use the opportunity for an ideological crusade against the U.S.S.R., but nothing came out of these attempts but a resolution of the League of Nations which prevented the latter's resurrection after the defeat of Hitlerism, and harder conditions for the Finns, who had put their trust in such sympathies instead of in compromise at the right moment. In 1941, the fact that leading Tory politicians were strongly anti Russian in their opinions and sentiments did not prevent the conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet alliance, but it would be wrong to deny that it has somewhat impaired its working. Class antagonism is not the only factor predominant in international politics, but it is a factor which no responsible statesman can afford to neglect, certainly no Russian statesman. Communist propaganda may be inclined to overstate this factor. But it is no overstatement to say that the help given by the Western labour movement to the Russian revolution during the critical years of 1918-20 may well have proved decisive, even if only by its indirect results. The sailors of the French Black Sea Fleet or the English dock workers who struck against shipping munitions for the Russian Whites made a less immediate contribution to the ultimate victory of the Reds than any of the latter's shock divisions. But no one can tell what would have been the consequences to the Russian Revolution had the Whites had the support of large conscript armies from the West—and it was the action of the French and English workers which made intervention on this scale impossible from the beginning. So the support of foreign sympathizers which the Soviet can count on is an important factor in the Soviet political and military war potential, just as the survival and development of the U.S.S.R. must be an essential weapon in the arsenal of any Socialist movement abroad. Similarly the U.S.S.R. cannot expect her ideological opponents to abandon their hostility. Accordingly her foreign policy must inevitably to a large extent aim at retaining and increasing the sympathy of the social and national movements on whose support she can rely. Evidently, it would have been very bad Soviet policy to stake the defence of the U.S.S.R. against the threatening Hitlerite aggression on the German Communist Party, or on those Western progressive groups whose sympathies might be temporarily alienated by the temporary respite, won by negotiations with Hitler and used to improve the industrial and

military forces of defence. But it would also have been bad Soviet policy to be indifferent towards 'Darlanism' or the survival of Franco even in a country whence the immediate security of the U S S R could hardly be threatened. In the political councils of any country, considerations of national interest based upon material factors of economic and military strength have to be balanced against considerations of national interest based upon political sympathies abroad which the country is likely to win by a suitable international policy. In the political councils of a country that has gone through a great revolution and knows, from its own experience, that an arithmetical calculation of the powers that be *does not always give the most correct estimate of the actual future relation of forces*, considerations for national interest are likely to be interpreted differently from the way current amongst people who are used to think only in terms of manpower and shipping accommodation. If the political leaders of such a country are Marxist Socialists, they will be inclined to describe the national interest of their country in winning political support abroad in terms of working-class internationalism. They even may be partly right in doing so, for practical sympathy is won not by friendly words, but only by effective help. But all this does not alter the fundamental fact that considerations in terms of sympathy to be won abroad are considerations of national interest just as well as considerations in terms of territory, planes, and guns. The revolutionary leader whose thought would not only centre round the maximum strengthening of his country as the preliminary condition of any contribution which this country could make to the common cause, would simply prove his complete unsuitability for his function.

During the first decade of the Russian Revolution, when Trotskyism was still an influential factor in Soviet policy, it was hardly possible to say that of the two currents striving for power one was nationalist and the other internationalist. The Trotskyists very soon became the opposition. So they had to criticize the government from the point of view of 'pure' Marxist orthodoxy—and Marxism, undoubtedly, is an internationalist ideology. But there is very little Marxist orthodoxy in those proposals which Trotsky is known to have put forward during the period when he could still seriously have hoped to gain power. The only time when the internal factions really gave first place to international problems was during 1926. Stalin advocated collaboration with moderate progressive forces abroad (the British TUC and the Chinese Kuomintang) which exercised a powerful influence in their own country, even though they opposed Communism. Trotsky and his followers would accept no such *pis aller*—to them it was 'all or nothing', the complete World Revolution or international isolation. But isolationism is not quite the same as internationalism.

The considerations of the revolutionary state of its potential foreign support form only one side of the picture, the other being the attitude of the potential supporters towards the revolutionary state. The Russians today have won the sympathy they enjoy abroad by their attempt to

realize in Russia, ideas which have developed in many different countries and which are shared by progressive men and women throughout the world. But in achieving what formerly was 'Utopia' the Russians have moved from the original idea, just as did Cromwell, Robespierre and Jefferson in their time. All ideas change when they leave the realm of print, pulpit and platform for that governed by the sterner laws which regulate the life of a state, especially in stormy times. But, though these changes may be necessary and inevitable, they are seldom palatable to the foreign sympathizers of the revolution who may have been attracted by just the details that look very well in books but collapse at the first attempt at realization. A glance at most of the books written by people who have been converted from admirers into unfriendly critics of the U.S.S.R. will show some specific reform through which the U.S.S.R. had won the sympathies of the particular writer—and lost them, when the continuation of this special kind of reform proved impossible. In many cases this special stumbling block will prove to be some detail of social and cultural life which, however interesting it may be from this or that artist's point of view, is not among those fundamental social issues that should determine the attitude of serious critics.

Some modifications in the ideas which inspire a revolution will, further, arise from the specific conditions of the country where it first succeeds. English seventeenth-century Puritanism was quite different from Dutch or even Scottish Puritanism. On many essential problems (including, for example, that of slavery) the leaders of the French Revolution thought very differently from their American contemporaries. In the eighteenth century, the colonists of British North America were not the most advanced people in the world. The world in which Harrington, Montesquieu and Rousseau developed their ideas was not the world in which the leaders of the English, American and French Revolutions achieved their practical realization, but the difference was slight compared with the gulf that separated twentieth century Russia from the England and the Germany where Marxist thought had been shaped. Consequently the Marxism which inspired and achieved the Russian Revolution bears strongly national traits. Once such national traits are fixed in the course of a revolution that deeply transforms national life, it becomes a matter of national pride to cherish them like all aspects of national life except those that have become obsolete in the new times. The need for self preservation at home and abroad further reinforces the tendency to treasure what has been bought at such a price in exertion and human lives, and which can only be preserved at the same price. During the war millions of Soviet soldiers and Soviet citizens laid down their lives. They did not die for some geographical unit with some mystical continuity behind it, 'eternal Russia', as some Conservatives in this country believe. Nor did they die for an abstract internationalist ideology. They died for Russia as they knew her, the U.S.S.R. with all her achievements and all her hopes. The prestige of Marxism with the ordinary Russian peasant or worker



derives from the achievements of the Revolution it inspired and the renaissance of the U S S R from the decayed Romanov empire

It follows, then, that Communism in Russia is something very different from the ideal that German or French Communists were dying for in the torture chamber, or Chinese Communists on the battlefields. The patriotic Russian may still speak of the world to come as a Soviet world. And no doubt to this world he makes a contribution no less real than did Cromwell's Ironsides and the French Jacobins to the world of today (or is it rather the world of yesterday?) The Russians may still be in sympathy with Communists abroad. They are so mainly because they have, sometimes, been badly let down even by the British Trade Union Council or the Kuomintang. But can any reasonable Russian statesman expect Socialism as we see it in Russia today to spread all over the world? Probably he will expect some kind of Socialism to spread, and Russia to be confronted by other Socialist states. But even such an expectation will not prevent him from cherishing specific Russian traits of Soviet Socialism, and being proud of them. Being a convinced Socialist, he may hope that in the world to come there will be only peaceful and friendly competition between peoples to making their best contribution to human development. But even so, after all that his nation has achieved in the struggle for Socialism, can he even desire the specific traditions and outlook of his nation to be merged in some melting pot, where the achievements of each nation would be measured by standards which are not necessarily those accepted by his own nation?

I think that by now the reader will not think it altogether preposterous if I declare bluntly that never at any stage of the Revolution have the Russians given serious thought to anything but the success of a *Russian* revolution. In the black and hopeless days at the beginning of the Revolution Lenin sustained the fearful by the promise of the help that would come from the Western proletariat, if only they could hold out. When however he himself had to decide whether to use his reserves to defend the Volga or to assist Soviet Hungary, Russia's potential link with the West, he did not hesitate for a moment. And when Russia, the Russian Revolution, was secure, it had to build the new life. What else could it do? A party which rules over a great country is not a sect of chiliasts, with nothing to do but demonstrate in conventicle the imminence of the Day of Judgement. If it had not succeeded in reconstructing Russia, the Russian Revolution would have succumbed to hostile intervention, long before World Revolution might intervene to help. And if World Revolution was bound to come, what better contribution could revolutionary Russia make to it than the example of her own reconstruction?

Red airmen flew to Spain to prove that there are *two* sides to any non-intervention treaty. There is no reason to doubt that, if necessary, the achievement could be repeated—in countries nearer to the Soviet frontier under more favourable conditions. But even if it should come to the extreme—could, in such a case, serious people expect the Russian

peasantry to give their boys, by millions, merely to help the German proletarians rid themselves of Noske, or Hitler, which they, evidently, were not strong enough to do by their own efforts? One need only consider the matter seriously to see the hollowness of all so-called revolutionary phraseology. The Russian peasant would give his sons, and the Red Army would march, armed with the weapons paid for by the sacrifices of the Russian people, if and when they believed that it was necessary for the defence of their own country, *their* revolution, for whose sake millions of workers and peasants had already died. Internationalism, as understood by the Russians, is a special aspect of the security of national attempts at reconstruction. As they are sincerely convinced (and, for reasons mentioned above, this conviction is hardly refutable) that progressive governments abroad are desirable in the interest of their national security, there is nothing contradictory in such an identification. From the point of view of foreign progressives it would be very unreasonable to expect Soviet support unless they can deliver the goods, i.e. make their efficient contribution to Soviet security. People who were unable to prevent the Munich appeasement, even if they wrote some articles against it, had no right to reproach the U.S.S.R. for temporarily appeasing Hitler in 1939. For an alternative policy would have cost the U.S.S.R. much more than ink and paper. If the U.S.S.R., in 1939 had guaranteed Poland's Western frontier without being allowed to cross the Eastern, as proposed by Chamberlain would, in such a case, his British left wing critics have prevented him from making a mere phoney war whilst Hitler proceeded through Poland against the U.S.S.R.? Could they—or anyone else—grant Russia actual British support, before Britain was involved in an actual struggle for life and death, and the hopes of the appeasers buried in the ruins of French power and of British cities? The demand made to another country to fight one's own wars with the blood of its sons is immoral, even if based upon moral standards accepted by that country. There is no higher responsibility of Russian revolutionaries than for their own revolutionary Russia.

Having lived in Russia as early as 1926, I do not feel that any serious people even then bothered about any problem but what to do in order to build a new society in Russia. The question 'what to do?' was decided by the needs of the Russian Revolution which we discussed in the first chapter of this book, and not by any consideration for the chances of World Revolution. The latter could only very indirectly enter the account as a factor in estimating the probability of renewed intervention and, so, the needs of building up the army and the means of defence. What had to be built had to be built—independent of whether, by Marxist orthodoxy, it was Socialism or something else. But it had to be paid for by the people, and it could not be achieved without demanding from the worker and peasant heavy sacrifices.

It is only at this point that specific Marxist ideology enters our discussion. The sacrifices which had to be made if reconstruction was to be achieved had to be justified in the eyes of the men who had to make

them. These men, during the Revolution, had been educated in the ideology that has sustained the Revolution, Marxism. On the other hand the Russian Revolution, for its own security, was dependent on the support of foreign Socialists. So, again, it had to retain the terminology in which were expressed the ideas which these supporters cherished.

Now, this is the point where Trotskyism intervened by denying that it was possible to build Socialism in a single country. In 1926 and 1927, when the discussion was at its height, the Trotskyist argument consisted merely of endless quotations from Holy Writ, to which Stalin replied that conditions had changed since the time of the classical Marxist writings. It was only in 1939 that he at last bluntly stated that Marx and Lenin, like ordinary mortals, sometimes made mistakes. So ended a discussion which had been extremely enjoyable for the average intellectual abroad, ignorant of Russia and of Russian, who, as long as it lasted, had been able to take part in very 'clever' disputes about the Russian Revolution without knowing anything at all about it! Superficially however it seems astonishing that serious people, who had much more important things to do, should have spent so much energy on so purely philological a discussion. But we must realize that to the Russians of the middle 'twenties the discussion was not in fact a matter of philology. What was really being discussed was not whether it was possible to build an ideal type of Socialism in one country, but whether *what* could be built in one country should be supported or opposed. Those who refused to agree that Soviet reconstruction was Socialism refused because they opposed the sacrifices which had to be made if it was to be achieved. Those who thought both reconstruction and sacrifices inevitable if the Revolution was to survive, realized that their differences with their opponents could be expressed in the single question 'Socialism in one country, possible or impossible?' So this question became the test of political orthodoxy.

But the new theory—and Stalin has now acknowledged that it *was* a new theory—needed some qualification unless the people were to concentrate their entire attention on internal reconstruction to the exclusion of external defence. If it were possible to achieve Socialism within a single country—why, then, bother about the goings on of other people abroad? Let them make their own revolution, if they could. If not—at least they might let the Russians alone! Stalin, however, maintained that although the victory of Socialism within a single country was possible, it could never be secure as long as the Socialist state was surrounded by capitalist countries, threatening intervention. If Russia's Socialist reconstruction was to be stable and secure from external attack, either her capitalist neighbours must become Socialist, or Russia herself must be prepared to spend huge sums on building up defences, capable, if need be, of meeting an attack from an alliance of the capitalist world.

In the early days of the Communist International it was considered a fundamental tenet of Marxism that, though the international wave of

Socialist revolutions might start from Russia, the achievement of complete Socialism in a predominantly agrarian country like Russia would follow, not precede, the achievement of Socialism in the highly industrialized countries of the West. This theory has been abandoned and replaced by the Stalinist conception of a Socialist Russia confronting a capitalist West possibly for a very long period. Inevitably there has resulted a profound change in the Russian attitude to the Communist International.

This organization had arisen, during the First World War,<sup>23</sup> out of the conviction of revolutionary Socialists in various countries that the failure of the Second International, during that war, was a consequence of its extreme decentralization. The freedom of each national party to decide its own policy allowed the Socialist parties of each country (or rather their opportunist wing) to compromise with their national *bourgeoisie*, and to support its war effort, for essentially reactionary purposes. To this very widespread conviction Lenin added the special argument that the growth of imperialism had rendered the reformist and social chauvinist trends within the labour movement of the various countries a permanent threat to international unity. It could be fought if extreme centralization were made a weapon of the revolutionaries against the reformists. Originally, this centralization was thought of as a co-ordination of revolutionary movements, and ultimately Soviet republics established in various countries. But the Russian revolution remained isolated. On the other hand, it proved so successful that its successes became the central argument of all Communist parties. To defend the only Socialist state against threatening intervention appeared as the main task of Communist policies. So the centralism of the Comintern became identical with the perpetuation of Russian leadership within it.

There was nothing mysterious in this consequence of an elementary political fact. Apart from whether or not the Russian Communists have supplied their fellow partisans abroad with money and organizers, they have supplied them with just that which the other trends in the organized labour movement lack, namely a clear and easily conceivable political conception and an example of its realization. It is true that the simplicity of the conception has gone with the rise of fascism. The basic conception of all Socialist internationalists that the workers of the world ought to unite, involves the question on what political basis they ought to unite. During World War I left wing Socialists believed that this could be done on the basis of each Socialist party simply opposing its own *bourgeoisie* and the war conducted for the latter's interest. Even

<sup>23</sup>The Communist International directly arose out of the organization of the Socialist Left, created at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences during World War I. The specific rôle of the Bolsheviks as opposed to other left wingers consisted in emphasizing the need for a split against all wavering elements, and ensuing centralization. The following success of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution, evidently due to their internal centralization, formed an additional argument in favour of their conception of international working-class organization.

during World War I only a small minority of the working-class parties<sup>11</sup> supported this view. After the rise of fascist governments, describing all *bourgeois* governments as equally dangerous enemies of the working classes would have blinked such questions as whether or not there were legal trade unions, a certain amount of legal working class activities, etc. Those who, in such a situation, simply continued to denounce the *bourgeoisie* of their own country as the only enemy, and suggest that the sabotage of the war-effort of that country was the only legitimate tactics of an internationalist labour movement, were bound to become sectarians without influence on the broad masses of the working classes. This, indeed, has happened to all Socialist groups that, like the I L P in this country, tried simply to follow the left-wing tradition of World War I, and thus danger has also threatened the Communist parties whenever they approached *bourgeois* democracy from a purely doctrinaire point of view, as in Germany in 1931 and in this country at the beginning of the present war. On the other hand, those Socialists who tried to orientate the labour movement simply on the antagonism between liberal and fascist *bourgeois* governments, could not avoid becoming auxiliaries of *bourgeois* Liberalism or Social Reform. By the slogan that the tactics of the international labour movement ought to be co-ordinated with those of the U S S R, the stronghold of that movement, Communism won a clear and simple direction that during World War II succeeded in rallying a very large part of those Socialist revolutionaries who were ready to do underground work under hard and dangerous conditions, and were sufficiently active to play an important role in the revolutionary mass movement. On the other hand, no member of any of the non-Russian Communist parties who has tried to oppose the specific conditions of the U S S R<sup>12</sup> has had any success. The Communist-minded worker, in any country, feels sympathetic towards Communism just because the U S S R has provided a practical example of the realization of Socialist ideas. And, being interested essentially in the class-element in internal and external policies, he is very anxious lest any criticism of the U S S R, within the labour movement, may prove a weapon of propaganda for those reactionary forces who try to involve his country in an anti-Soviet policy.<sup>13</sup> The Russian Bolsheviks, good realists as they were, had no interest in making sectarians of those forces abroad, upon whose support they relied, and have seen to it that the mentioned examples of extreme isolation of the respective Communist parties from the bulk of the labour movement

<sup>11</sup>Only in Russia and Bulgaria, and also amongst the Austrian and Serbian Yugoslavs the Bolsheviks or kindred trends controlled a majority of the organized labour movement, whilst in Italy, whose participation in the World War had been of an especially adventurous character, a distinct majority was anti-war, although not in favour of Bolshevik theories. All other left wing Socialist movements became strong only after the end of the war.

<sup>12</sup>In spite of the fact that some formerly renowned leaders of the various C.P.s, at various times, have made such attempts.

<sup>13</sup>The later evolution of most Communist renegades—Donnot being only an extreme example—gives some strength in this view.

have remained ephemeral episodes. After the dissolution of the Comintern, American Big Business organs openly expressed the hope that, now, the left wing labour movement would get a Trotskyist, or other Utopian and therefore harmless, orientation. Such expectations are very characteristic of sound judgement on the direction in which the Russian influence, in the Comintern, was likely to work—although it may be feared that such hopes will remain vain, their authors being not the only realistically minded people in the world of today.

It is certainly true that Soviet foreign policy has, occasionally, provided its supporters in other countries with some propagandist difficulties. But, on the other hand, the intervention plans during the Soviet Finnish war, 'Darlanism', the British intervention in Greece and Java, and various similar adventures, form an increasing list of permanent handicaps for the advocates of the liberal and Western interpretation of international labour policies. For the above-mentioned<sup>1</sup> reasons of self preservation the U.S.S.R. is likely to follow such an international policy that identification with it should still be the easiest way for non Russian consistent Socialists, if identification of international Socialist policies with those of a Great Power, or group of Great Powers, is necessary. At least as long as there are no broad revolutionary movements such identification is likely to be regarded as the only realist policy, especially by people who have gone through the disillusionments of Utopian revolutionarism. Few continental Socialists will be inclined to discuss the merits or demerits of Stalinist Russia as a prototype of Socialism, as long as the comparison lies with restoring the traditional Greek, Roumanian, Hungarian, or similar regimes with their prospective backers, not to speak of Catholic fascism which may be covered by different formulas in Spain and Austria, or a restoration of the traditional German bureaucracy as the only reliable anti Communist force apart from the convert Nazis. And in any case, whether or not willing and likely to realize the complete millennium, the Soviet as a Great Power has proved efficient and able to stand by its words. So—with or without the Comintern—it provides a focus round which many non Russian Socialists may rally.

But this is only one side of the problem. The very existence of the Communist International has proved to be a very efficient weapon for anti Soviet propaganda, especially with the simple lower middle-class public which cannot envisage revolution save as the sinister product of secret forces working from abroad, and which is sufficiently inconsistent to combine extreme nationalism with the fear that the cherished national order could be undermined by the import of a social system grown under completely different conditions. I do not believe that, for some time past, serious politicians in any country have made their policies towards the U.S.S.R. dependent on the existence or non existence of the Comintern. But, in any case the latter's dissolution has rendered the task of the advocates of international collaboration easier,

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 97ff.

by depriving its antagonists of an efficient weapon of propaganda. As regards the non Russian Communist parties themselves, the existence of a centralized organization led from Moscow has exposed them, apart from the inevitable attacks any advocate of collaboration with the U S S R has to endure, to the reproach that they could only imitate Russian policies, and, still more serious, that such Russian policies could only be short sighted.

Between 1926 and 1943, that is between the general acceptance in Russia, of Stalin's conception of Socialism in a single country and the dissolution of the Comintern, the function of the Comintern, in the Russian view, was to some extent to counterbalance the 'capitalist environment'. It was one—and not the principal—instrument of the defence of the U S S R. In Russia herself it was overshadowed by the Red Army. Even abroad, there was nothing to prove that under all imaginable circumstances the best possible check on the aggressive intentions of Russia's capitalist neighbours would be provided by the local Communist parties. Once it had been recognized that the main object of Soviet policy towards the progressive parties abroad must be to make sure that they would exercise their influence against interventionist enterprises, it was obvious that a body like the British T U C would be considerably more influential and effective than a small and isolated group, as the Communist Party of Great Britain then was. We have already seen<sup>16</sup> that Stalin, for his part, was ready to supplement the connections with the local Communist parties by broader alliances with non Communist progressive forces. This was the logical consequence of the new outlook. No reasonable Russian statesman could expect Sir Walter Citrine to establish Socialism in Britain, or Chiang Kai shek to transform the Chinese national revolution into that 'democratic dictatorship of the Workers and Peasants' which according to Communist theory would have been the correct course of action for Chinese revolutionaries. But it was not at all unreasonable to expect both of them to oppose tendencies towards an anti-Soviet capitalist alliance. Once it became clear that such expectations were actually justified, the need for a specific Communist International, as far as the U S S R, was concerned would disappear. Stalin's antagonists, in the 1926-7 discussions, actually reproached him with preparing the transformation of the Comintern into a wide and loose union of all degrees of the Left, deprived of distinct Communist traits. It is hardly doing an injustice to this supreme tactician to presume that he would have been very glad if he had been able, then undisturbed by doctrinaire considerations, simply to answer 'Of course I would, if I could'. The only trouble was that he could not. For every union supposes the existence of two partners ready to compromise.

In the middle 'twenties, and again ten years later, the Communists—evidently according to the desires of the U S S R—took the initiative in establishing some degree of political co-operation with non Communist

<sup>16</sup>See p. 99

is nothing illogical in the fact that the Soviet and its British followers sometimes felt more sympathy for Mr Eden than for the I L P—maybe even more than for some trends within the T U C. There is, besides, nothing anti Marxist in it. Marxism recognizes nationality as one of the driving forces of history—it only refuses to regard it as a force independent of the social forces shaping it. Whatever the role of the working classes in giving the nationalism of as many nations as possible a progressive and pro Soviet outlook, Soviet policy has to reckon with nations, as the immediate agents in history—at least apart from acute revolutionary crises—and has to be framed so as to win the broadest possible support. From this point of view the existence of the Comintern was a handicap to the U S S R, as well as to the Communist parties who strove for a co ordination of the development of their respective nations with that of the U S S R.<sup>100</sup> I do not think that either Russian or non Russian Communists were much disappointed when an opportunity was found to get rid of what had become a fetter to their political development in a situation when both Soviet American relations and the application of the British C P for affiliation to the Labour Party might be well served by the move. Retrospectively the Russians will certainly find that the Comintern has served a good purpose by transferring the lessons of their experiment to the radical wing of the international labour movement, and that even its extreme centralization had its good side, from their point of view. It has prevented the inevitable disappointment of many Western Socialists with the actual evolution of Stalinist Russia from causing estrangement between the bulk of Western left wing Socialism and the U S S R. It is true that this very achievement of the Soviet provides the Social Democrats with their main counter argument against the present Communist attempts to re unite the Labour movement. They assert that the spirit inculcated in all Communist parties would prevent a united party taking a stand against the U S S R, whenever the latter's interests clash with the interests of the Western democracies, and since the Social Democrats look West for their policies, their interpretation of national interests must follow from this orientation. It depends upon one's definition of Socialism whether one considers that such an argument is more destructive to Communism than to its critics, nevertheless this argument is used even in countries where the consequences of the split in the labour movement have been as obvious as in Germany. The average continental—or non European—worker regards the fact that there is once more a united, world wide Trades Union movement as one of the great achievements arising from the last crisis. Therefore, he is suspicious and likely to argue against his national movement lining up with the British Labour Party if he sees that it gives encouragement to such organizations as the A F of L which is apparently attempting to break the link between the labour movement and the U S S R, or finds that it deals sympathetically with the discredited remains of



working-class International has ceased to exist, may further the international collaboration of parties few of which would fit either pattern. But new problems have arisen.

When the Soviet broadcast replaced, after the dissolution of the Comintern, the traditional slogan 'Workers of the World, unite' by the new one 'Death to the fascist invaders' they certainly saw no contradiction between the two. The new one seemed more efficient for influencing larger masses of people inside and outside Russia. Those German Communists who happened to be within the formations of von Paulus' Sixth Army did not succeed in hastening the surrender by a single day, whilst French, Czech, Yugoslav and Bulgarian Communists succeeded in heading national movements of resistance. The Russians being realists count on realities and not on hopes—although they have certainly never ceased to cherish hopes. In his interview with Reuters' after the dissolution of the Comintern, Stalin laid emphasis on 'co-operation between the Allied and other nations', and any Communist-influenced prisoners of Stalingrad were given a chance to influence their comrades in arms, and future German events. They had little success, but after Germany's capitulation it was the Russians who took the initiative in admitting German trade unions and democratic parties in their zone of occupation and who forced the pace upon the other occupying Powers who had planned for a rather bureaucratic regime. But whatever their hopes for the future, for the present the Russians must accept the fact that there are some national movements for whose sympathies they may hope, and others that must be regarded as likely opponents. Hence serious problems for the international labour movement arise.

Marxism does not reject nationalism. It investigates its social origins, and accordingly assesses the historical prospects of each particular national movement. Very generally, it is possible, for example, to state that in consequence of past developments the Ukrainian is socially the 'under-dog' in his relations to the Pole, the Roumanian or Southern Slav in his relations to the Magyar, the Pole, Czech or Magyar in his relations to the German. The national emancipation of the 'under-dog' nations may therefore be regarded as part of the social emancipation of workers and peasants hitherto oppressed. But once there is nationalism, for whatever reasons, it acquires an independent power of its own whose effects are not limited to those instances where they are legitimate from the viewpoint of the labour movement and of other people interested in the emancipation of 'under-dogs'. Whilst Social Democracy, in many countries, has taught the workers to identify themselves with all national demands, even those involving the perpetuation of other nations' oppression, it was the great achievement of international Communism to reject the slogan 'my nation, right or wrong'. In pre-war Czechoslovakia, for example, German Social Democrats shared in the protests against dividing up the estates of German-controlled abbey in the course of the land reform, because Czech peasants were likely to

profit along with the Germans. But Czech Communists demanded the recognition of the right of the Slovaks and the Sudeten Germans to complete self-determination as a preliminary condition to a settlement of the nationality question by mutual agreement. There is no longer a split in the Czech labour movement since both parties support the whole nationalist programme, including the expulsion even of those Sudeten German anti fascists who are not prepared to abandon their national civilization, with the argument that the Czech people, on the whole, represented a progressive trend in history, and became a victim of German aggression, but there is no more common ground for an agreement between Czech and Sudeten German Communists. Today it may be not too difficult for German Socialists of whatever description to denounce the harm done to the German people by the attempts to oppress other nations and to defend the return of Polish soil to Poland, if necessary with some discrimination in favour of Polish labourers against the claims of German Junkers, and of Polish miners versus German burghers. In view of the different attitudes of the various occupying Powers, German Communists may succeed in proving a German working class interest in strengthening the U S S R. But even they can not succeed in defending the Oder Neisse frontier, unless the mere statement that the German people has to bear the consequences of the policies of its former leaders is regarded as a successful defence.

From the standpoint of the U S S R the nationalism of various peoples, most<sup>101</sup> of them Slavs, has proved an efficient ally, and it is obvious that the partners of the U S S R. do not refrain from encouraging nationalist claims by Greeks, Poles or even Italians, wherever it fits their diplomatic game. It is possible to compromise with the Anglo-Saxon powers in the common language of nationalism, whilst unbridgeable antagonism would be met if the U S S R. spoke in terms of class sympathies. It is easier to argue with England that the Allied Yugoslavs should not be discriminated against in favour of ex-enemy Italy rather than to emphasize the evident preference of the Trieste dock workers—Italians as well as Yugoslavs—for the Yugoslav rather than the English regime of occupation. Certainly, the position of the Italian Communists gets more difficult in this way. From their standpoint, to give preference to the social demands of Trieste dock-workers rather than to national susceptibilities would be easier than to defend Yugoslav nationalism as opposed to that of their own people. In favour of the Soviet standpoint it may be said that the peoples of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia have no greater interest than that of preserving peace, and that safe-guarding Soviet interest by agreement with other Great Powers is, in itself, desirable. But such a general desire supplies no standard by which the particular contents of such agreement can be assessed.

<sup>101</sup>Not all of them—the Soviet demands against Turkey are based upon Armenian rather than upon Bulgarian claims. Besides the Armenian case is certainly good in view of the historical record, whilst many things could be said, from the Allied standpoint, against both the Bulgars and the Turks.

Within the Soviet sphere of influence the domestic nationalities policy of the U S S R , which itself is derived from the standards of the international labour movement, works as a regulating standard. Hungarians and Roumanians may agree that the Transylvanian question has been settled better than at any time before, and so do Bulgarians and Yugoslavs (except Serb chauvinists) regarding Macedonia. But nationalism has been allowed to have its free course in those regions where the spheres of influence meet, that is to say in the very regions where it is highly desirable to remove explosive matter by acceptance of a superior standard. German, Austrian, Italian and Greek Communists may claim that the U S S R has been the main defender of the establishment of democracy in their countries and that this is more important for the workers of their country than sacrifices (or what are believed to be sacrifices) in favour of the nationalities favoured by Soviet policies. But the argument will be convincing from the standpoint of the labour movement of the respective countries as a whole, only if Darlanism or the British intervention in Greece remained typical of Western interference with European problems (which would not exclude democratic arguments being used in criticizing Bulgarian or Rumanian politics). Should things evolve in another direction, different attitudes of the two wings of the labour movement towards alleged national discrimination may increase a cleavage born of differences in domestic politics and orientation towards different international patterns. Divisions in the national labour movements arising in this way would be bound to reduce the chances of international working class co-operation.

Very much depends on the future international configuration. If inter-allied co-operation were replaced by hardly veiled competition for widening the respective spheres of influence and the labour movement developed no policy of its own, much more than the international connections of labour would be endangered. In such a case the dissolution of the Comintern might, for a very long period, mark the end of another Marxian concept that would have proved premature. Socialism might come even in such a case—but it would not necessarily involve the realization of those ideals of international co-operation Marxism inherited from nineteenth-century Liberal democracy. No one can expect the Russians to stake the success of their great experiment on the issue of whether or not international Socialism will prove possible. On the other hand there is no reason to doubt that revolutionary Russia will retain considerable interest in progressive international movements, even if merely for the sake of her own security.

A question, very different from that concerning the alleged presence or absence of proletarian internationalism among the Russians, frequently arises concerning their preparedness to enter international organizations conjointly with the existing, capitalist states—or rather, their attitude on such occasions, as that preparedness in itself is hardly questionable. Though the average Bloomsbury left wing (possibly in ontogenetic repetition of the phylogenetic process by which proletarian

internationalism evolved from liberalism) prefers to ignore it, the argument, in such a case, is just the opposite of that needed on the issue of proletarian internationalism. To reproach Stalinist Russia with having dropped proletarian internationalism means to reproach her with being Russian at the expense of being Socialist—whilst the current criticism of her defence of the 'obsolete concept of national sovereignty, of her defending her right to veto decisions of the Security Council, etc., involves reproaching her for being conscious of not simply being a state alongside others, but representing a different social system. Even amongst people who are not prepared to go to the length of Mr Clarence Streit who naively describes the incorporation of the civilized world (with their colonies preserved in their present status) into the U.S.A. as the consummation of internationalism, it is fashionable to regard any one who speaks of national sovereignty, or defends the claims of a Great Power, as a reactionary for that very reason. But even the defenders of such a viewpoint should recognize that it is impossible to understand the attitude of the Russians from a viewpoint which they do not share, and that any criticism of Soviet policies has to start from whatever aspect the point at issue assumes in Marxist sociology, especially in those fields where the Russians cannot see any reason to revise Marxist theory.

For a Marxist, the concepts of international law, just like those of any other law, are institutional forms, which in different historical situations exercise different functions, and the historical role of which in any given situation depends on the social forces that find expression by them. State sovereignty, for example, is regarded as a progressive concept as long as it serves the emancipation of the national states from the medieval concept of a universal papal empire, but as distinctly reactionary when it serves the self assertion of imperialist powers. In a period of social transition the concept of state sovereignty may involve the right of a nation to decide the structure of its social life, and thus may form the foundation of peaceful co-existence of the two systems—as opposed to the alternative of intervention and counter intervention. If the issue is put in such general terms as these, that statement is likely to be supported by a great bloc of liberal opinion. Disagreement will start when we define it in more concrete terms. The citizen of a large country whose social structure is rationalized in a particular system of economic or political values, will probably be inclined to regard the federation of small nations into an economic and social unit similar to his own as something valuable in itself which only hide-bound nationalists could decry. Marxism regards nationality as an expression of certain social facts and aspirations. No technique, however valuable in certain circumstances in order to realize this or that social content, can be regarded as superior to that content itself. If, say, a Western European federation were to be based upon the gold-standard—as conceivable in the event of it being based upon a certain kind of external support—and some people in France or Belgium deem that

the gold standard means periodical depressions and permanent mass unemployment, they have to oppose such a federation and are certainly not worse internationalists (the banker's internationalism left aside) for doing so

The issue of international social order may be expressed in terms, say, of the rights of racial and religious minorities. In Eastern Europe, the struggle between the 'top-dog' and the under-dog' (in the socio-economic sense) has frequently found expression in national and religious divergence. In those instances, majority rule (as it also does elsewhere, though in other forms) interferes with rights regarded as legitimate by people who regard themselves as the representatives of the 'higher civilization', and who may find sympathy abroad among people in a similar social position. There was nothing anti internationalist in the Russians refraining from having, for example, the Sudeten German issue decided by a man with Lord Runciman's background, who, during his stay in Czechoslovakia, spent his weekends on the castles of German or Germanophile nobles, or American politicians who have to compare the respective weights of the Czechoslovak and of the German vote in the U S A , or even by some Swiss who may simply apply their standards to the conditions of a completely different country. On the other hand, it is obvious that from the Marxist viewpoint the concept of national sovereignty and equality is relevant only for deciding the ways of life of the respective nation—or, if completely free decision on this point is impossible for a small nation, at least choosing the most desirable of the available alternatives. Of the two social systems at present competing for the allegiance of the civilized world one is represented by one Great Power which still has to struggle for the international recognition of the somewhat similar systems in adjacent countries, and the other by some scores of 'sovereign states' ranging between Nicaragua and Luxemburg and the U S A . But there is no sense in elevating this historical fact to any 'democratic' rule allowing majority decision on issues of international order. But it is just this that the opponents of the Yalta compromise on the voting procedure in the Security Council demand.

If there is to be any world wide international organization in our time, it must be based upon the fact of the co-existence of two different social systems and the need for agreement between them as the alternative to World War No 3. As long as the U S S R is the main power representing the new system, the institutional form in which that need is expressed may be described as a privilege, or right of veto granted to it—just as no one can be prevented from describing the higher representation granted to the smaller of the States of the U S A in the Senate as a privilege granted to the farmers. Such compromises have to be made wherever a larger unit is to be formed by combining different communities with an internal strength sufficient to prevent them from submitting to the merely statistical fact that they do not form a majority. They are made in cases—as the example just quoted which is common

to nearly all federations—where they protect some millions of citizens from being overruled in matters concerning their essential interests by some more millions who have other interests, and it is difficult to see why they should be less legitimate when protecting a unit of some hundred million people from being overruled by the fact that all the Nicaraguas and Luxemburgs are also sovereign states, that actually, four of the greatest Powers and two of the acknowledgedly Great Powers (with a smaller enfranchized population than its own) happen to have a different social system. To say that a state demanding such privileges demands for itself the freedom to exercise aggression, is simply an unfriendly way of saying that an international organization based upon the collaboration of states with different social systems, cannot decide by majority such cases of conflict whose causes differ according to the angle of view through the differing economic systems. Whether some Finland, rejecting Soviet proposals such as those of autumn 1939 is a defender of Christian civilization and an exemplary debtor defending the sanctity of international loans, or at best a rather unreasonable dwarf state which rejects a good bargain offered it by the only Great Power which can prevent aggression in that region, depends on the viewpoint of the interested Powers. This kind of issue cannot be decided by a League of Nations vote without elevating the socio political bias of the majority of the 'sovereign states' to a code to be forced on the representatives of the state whose economic system gives it an opposite bias. Such a state, when faced by a majority vote of this kind, which is in fact a vote of censure against its political and economic system, will feel justified in describing such procedure as hostile intervention. No one can be prevented from advocating that his cherished social order be spread or restored in that way, but it is inconsistent to reproach the Soviet for lacking interest in international collaboration merely because Russia demands safeguards against such procedure. In the era of atomic bombs it is worth an effort not only to prevent wars, but if such wars are ever fought by two Great Powers each representing different social systems, to prevent it from being described as a 'war of humanity' against a state branded as an aggressor by the very organization which was helped into existence by the state thus described.

(b) *New Emphasis on the State*

Most Western progressives are inclined to think of 'Socialism' as a state of society completely fulfilling their ideals of justice, freedom, and equality. Such standards are accepted by Marxism, classical<sup>102</sup> as well as contemporary Russia, only for its ultimate aim, Communism. Socialism is defined as an order of society that still shows essential features of the capitalist society out of which it has grown, especially

<sup>102</sup>By far the most important source is Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875) of German Social Democracy, which Lenin in his *State and Revolution* (1917) constantly refers to, with rather stronger emphasis on the transitional character of Socialism and the Socialist state.

inequality of income and recognition of higher income as one (although not the only) incentive for the citizen to make his maximum contribution to national wealth. As distinct from a capitalist society, Socialism, even in its first phase, is characterized by complete nationalization of the means of production, abolition of unearned income, centralized planning, and permanent full employment. In this sense the victory of 'Socialism in one country' can be taken as an achieved historic fact. But it is another question whether the ultimate aims of the labour movement, as they are to be understood from Marxism as hitherto formulated, can be achieved if Socialism is to be indefinitely confined even to a sixth or a fifth of the world. Evidently, such partial realization not only makes impossible the permanent peaceful order aimed at by Socialism, but it also makes very questionable the achievement of the ultimate political and economic aims of Communism. To accommodate itself to the limitations of the Soviet state, Marxist theory had to be reinterpreted, and this reinterpretation embraced the very definition of Communism.

Distribution of the consumable part of the nation's production in proportion to the contribution each citizen has made to the common wealth, with resulting inequality of income, is regarded by orthodox Marxism as a necessary but temporary evil. Similarly the state is a relic of the former class society, a weapon to be used to build the new society in which there will be neither class nor state. In this Communist society distribution according to work done will give place to distribution according to needs, enforced discipline to a voluntary one. The repressive organs of the state will be replaced by free communal self government, based on persuasion and a newly educated public opinion. Marxism is not chiliastic as was the anarchic Communism of Kropotkin or Tolstoy. That is to say, Marxism does not suppose that moral forces at any time will work independently of social organization. But it is, in its ultimate aims, hostile to the state in the sense that its objective is the elimination of all elements of compulsion from social organization. In this sense it is the true child of nineteenth-century Liberalism, and anarchic in its ultimate aims as is all sincere Liberalism. Just because in its ultimate aims Marxism goes beyond state organization, and because its theoretical attitude is highly critical towards this type of social organization, Marxism is ready to use it as long as may be necessary simply as a weapon, without taking account of democratic and humanitarian principles should their recognition threaten the effective use of that weapon. Democracy and Humanity, in the true sense of the words, lie beyond the state: as long as there is a state, even a Socialist state, there will be no true freedom, and the reign of freedom begins where the reign of the state ends.

Thus is a clear-cut theory that admirably meets the needs of the Western intellectual who wants to fight social inequality with efficient weapons while believing in Freedom as the ultimate goal. It does not answer the needs of a state that must be supported and defended by all

its citizens without reservation, even at the price of supreme sacrifices. From the theoretical point of view, the ideal Marxist state would be the temporary dictatorship of an avowedly class organization which consciously stressed its temporary character and its intention of 'withering away' once its mission was fulfilled. For this would be the surest way of avoiding the necessity of abolishing the state, once its usefulness had passed, by a second revolution which very easily might result in the establishment of new state machinery. Trotskyism, without recognizing the present Soviet state even as Socialist, plays with the idea of a 'second revolution'. Stalinism maintains, evidently with some reason, that in a period like the present it would be difficult to distinguish such a 'second revolution' from an ordinary counter revolution like the Restoration in this country or the establishment of the Directorate in France.<sup>103</sup> Facts, in any case, prove that the Soviet state is not in any sense 'withering away'. It develops from year to year, it grows stronger and, in some respects at least, more oppressive towards dissenters—as any régime is bound to do in a difficult international situation. Theories about the 'withering away' of the state at some time in the future are neither very convincing, nor politically helpful, nor are comparisons between the present Socialism and ideal Communism, especially as the achievement of the latter depends on the maintenance of conditions of international peace and security which the average Soviet citizen can only consider Utopian, and which certainly cannot be achieved by the U.S.S.R. in isolation.

Even after the possibility of achieving Socialism in a single country had become obvious, a modification of the original Trotskyist argument could still be maintained. 'Yes, we can achieve Socialism in the U.S.S.R. alone, but further progress towards Communism is impossible until we have been joined by many other countries'. Even within the framework of socialism there is still quite a lot to do in the U.S.S.R., so that a man who held these opinions would not necessarily find himself in opposition to the Stalinist policy of reconstruction at home. The necessity of opposition would arise when it came to foreign affairs. For him the only hope of future progress towards full Communism would lie in a policy of international adventure.

Thus it was an act of the highest political consequence when at the beginning of 1938<sup>104</sup> Stalin put forward the theory that just as it was possible to achieve Socialism in the U.S.S.R. in isolation, so it was possible to achieve Communism—given adequate protection against foreign intervention. There was nothing to prevent the country from becoming so rich that the state would be able to distribute an ever-increasing number of commodities without expecting payment and to distribute them in accordance with each citizen's needs. As we have seen in the second chapter, in the U.S.S.R. today the tendency is to lay

<sup>103</sup>Both began, indeed, with 'leftist' opposition to the dictatorship.

<sup>104</sup>In his letter to the propagandist Ivanov.



emphasis on material rewards for effort, to use these as incitements to increased production, and to cut down to some extent the social services available freely to all irrespective of their contribution to the national needs. But in many progressive countries there is a distinct tendency to develop unpaid services—milk for children is a case in point. The U S S R has wrought miracles. It would not be the most miraculous of her achievements if, even in the present generation, her grain production increased so enormously that bread and meal could be obtained in public shops without payment. Thus 'distribution according to needs' would be realized at least for the commodity that is still most essential to the Russian peasant of today. Of course, this would only be possible if, meanwhile, the average Russian peasant had developed such extensive new and varied tastes and needs that he would always have some inducement to make him work harder and earn more, in spite of the fact that the free bread would save him from starvation even if he lived in complete idleness. There are no insurmountable obstacles to such 'distribution according to needs' being extended to an increasing number of goods. Such a line was envisaged in Stalin's letter to the propagandist Ivanov and in his report on the Party congress of 1939. It would, of course, involve a considerable extension of state education before it would be possible to maintain that everyone worked 'according to his or her abilities', and to fulfil the other half of the Communist formula. But there is nothing impracticable in principle in it.

In this country, plans have been drawn up to ensure a 'social minimum' for everyone, whether employed or not, and some of the projects advocated prior to the publication of the Beveridge Report go very far in this direction. Should such plans be carried into effect, the stimulus to active production would lie merely in those needs which could not be satisfied by the subsistence minimum granted to everyone. The authors of such plans are not considered irresponsible, for the Western worker is supposed to have more extensive needs than may be satisfied out of an income of, say, twenty four shillings a week in peacetime. Undoubtedly, in a capitalist society all projects that would eliminate bare want as a guarantee of industrial discipline and of subjection to the existing distribution of national wealth<sup>108</sup> have to be scrutinized as to their practicability and compatibility with the existing order. In the U S S R whose social system is based on other incentives to social discipline than those current in a capitalist system, schemes similar to these could not be called Utopian unless it is supposed that, for some undefined reason, the Soviet worker's standard of living must remain permanently at a level below that of his English or American fellows. From the point of view of the rulers of the U S S R enormous efforts would certainly be worth while, for the achievement of the state of society described above would render the Soviet system morally even stronger than it is today, and would reduce all hopes of its external enemies to idle dreams. Such a system could be described as a gradual achievement of the ultimate aim,

<sup>108</sup>See the article by a correspondent to *The Times*, 23 January 1943

Communism Whether it would be quite the same Communism as that of Marx and Lenin is another question

As Stalin emphatically maintains, there would still remain the state, until the nebulous day when this kind of Communism had been established all over the world. The coercive functions of the state would gradually be restricted to defence, both against enemies abroad and fifth columnists at home. But it would still be a state in the strict Marxist sense, an organ of repression, complete with G P U. The problems involved can only be touched on here. For example, how could a state with an enormous defence budget achieve such material wealth that 'Communist' distribution would become practicable, even in the restricted sense described above, if every citizen were to be granted more than the most essential foods, etc? And if additional productive efforts were needed to pay for defence as well as for Communist distribution, how could the coercive element be eliminated from the state's internal activities? At present, we find that an increasing number of rules of social behaviour that in other countries are enforced by the threat of unemployment, such as punctuality and sobriety at work, are enforced, in the U S S R., by the Penal Code, and forcible re-education of the least disciplined members of society is regarded as as normal a function of the state as is encouragement of the desirable pattern of social behaviour by public approval. Can the functions of the state as the social machinery established for the direction of economic activities at any time be completely divorced from such educational functions? Of the state in its economic functions we read in recent authoritative Soviet publications<sup>1024</sup> that it is bound to be strengthened by economic progress, thus implying increased opportunities for the state to control the development of the productive forces, and that in this regard the Soviet state fundamentally differs from most of the preceding types of political regimes which proved a handicap for the development of the productive forces beyond a certain stage with which they were compatible. May we conclude from such statements that the reference of the ultimate 'withering away' of the state to a higher and international stage of Communism was a mere intermediary step in the process of dropping this piece of Utopia?

The new conception of Communism, as realizable in a single country and under the protection of a state, has removed any restraint which Marxist theory was able to impose on the cult of the revolutionary state. In Marxist theory, the compulsory power of this state approaches as closely as possible to the working class in arms. Lenin taught that proletarian dictatorship means educating every washerwoman to help in ruling the state. Government should be reduced to such simplicity as to be within the competence of every member of the working class who is ready to make an effort at self-education. One can interpret such ideas to mean that Marxism is in favour of home guards (preferably on a factory basis), elected popular judges, and local self-government. In all

<sup>1024</sup>See A. Makarovsky's article in *Bolshevik*, 1946, No. 6

these respects the U S S R reaches any reasonable democratic standard. But that is hardly the point. These democratic activities are mere subsidiaries to other, permanent and professional, organs of the state, such as trained conscript soldiers, professional officers, trained judges in the chair, and an enormous civil service. Lenin, of course, was not so Utopian as to ignore the necessity of professions of this kind, but he hoped that their preponderance over the voluntary and popular services would prove merely temporary. He hoped to see the professional state officials as mere auxiliaries. Meanwhile the washerwoman would be able to learn. Her daughter might leave the factory some hours earlier and participate in the deliberations of the Supreme Court—provided supreme courts were still necessary. If the washerwoman is to gain the self-confidence necessary for rule, she has to feel herself the master, and the permanent employees in the office to be her clerks. The theory, no doubt, strengthened the self confidence of the Russian worker and thus enabled him to do his part. From the point of view of the civil servant it is a less flattering theory.

The tradition of the Party has been fully embodied in that of the state which it controls. In 1941 Stalin took over the office of Prime Minister, thus elevating it from the secondary place in comparison with the leadership of the Party which it had held since Lenin's death.<sup>106</sup> The first revolution, that of 1917, had been the work of revolutionary masses, led by a revolutionary party. But the second, and no less important revolution, the industrialization of the country and collectivization of agriculture in 1928-33, is now officially acknowledged to have been the work of the state.<sup>107</sup> Far from 'withering away' the latter has thus achieved prestige not merely as the bulwark of the Revolution, but as the real foundation of the revolutionary achievements. It is surrounded by a myth, like other states. Anyone who knows the facts—if only from Lenin's writings, has only to read the chapters of the official *History of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.* which cover the first years of the Revolution to understand that these chapters were not written as an academic contribution to history. They were written to propagate those judgements and that selection of the facts that the authors felt would strengthen the authority of the new state and its leader.

But the state now needed able and ambitious people to be attracted into the civil service and into the army, especially the corps of commissioned and non-commissioned officers. And the state needed its authority to be extended over everyone, including washerwomen who employed their leisure time in useful social work, as many of them do, for example in the housing and welfare sections of the local Soviets. In many cases daughters of 1917 washerwomen have, indeed, reached

<sup>106</sup> Lenin himself led the Party and the state from his position as Prime Minister (which he entered at the time when the Soviet was a coalition government), with the enormous authority he enjoyed within a party he had virtually created. Stalin became leader of the Party at a time when the supreme state-offices were in the hands of competing party leaders with an authority originally not inferior to his.

<sup>107</sup> *History of the C.P.S.U.*, English edition, p. 305

highly responsible positions in the Soviet government, after taking university courses the doors to which have been opened to them by the Revolution. But the fact that leading state officials have arisen from the working class is no argument, from their point of view, for minimizing the authority and the discipline of a state—especially one which is accepted as the true realization of working class ideals. Once the state had been accepted as inevitable there was, indeed, no more place for any theory foreseeing the 'withering away of the law'<sup>108</sup> unless a 'lawless state', i.e. purely arbitrary rule, were accepted. Any revolution means loosening, any political stabilization means strengthening the rule of law. The progressiveness of the law is not always in proportion to its 'elasticity'.<sup>109</sup>

The more visible aspect of the emphasis on state authority is the conscious encouragement of that professional *esprit de corps* which previously had been gravely frowned on. Most of all the need for emphasizing this spirit was felt with regard to army officers, whose professional ambition was to form an essential factor in the defence of the state.<sup>110</sup> This does not mean that the previous subordination of the military to the civil authorities was in any way lessened. In a revolutionary state this could be done only at the highest risk to the existing political order. During the Tukhachevsky crisis in May 1937 the powers of the political commissars were even increased. For all politically decisive purposes, the higher commands were replaced by Military Councils under the effective control of the highest Party officials. The danger once overcome, these measures were partly repealed (this was after the Finnish war, in 1940). During the last war, in an hour of supreme danger, the powers of the commissars and of the Military Councils were again increased—although this time nothing had happened that might throw the slightest suspicion upon the loyalty of the officers. After fifteen months of war, in October 1942, the Political Commissars were abolished again—evidently, the Soviet deemed the crisis overcome and the reliability of the new officers' corps, most of whom had become Party members during the last few years, definitely established. Now the authority of the commanding officers had to be strengthened, and there was such a shortage of experienced officers that the state preferred to employ suitable political commissars rather than a separate command. The assumption by the supreme political leader of the Party not only of the virtual control (which, of course, he always had) but also of the formal command of the Army, with a corresponding military rank has demonstrated that the Party desires henceforth, to exercise its leadership not *qua* Party, but by training and providing the most suitable candidates for the leading functions in the state hierarchy. Since 1939 anyone who does any useful work can join the

<sup>108</sup>See pp. 80-1

<sup>109</sup>See my *Soviet Legal Theories* published in 1945 in the International Library for Sociology and Social Reconstruction, Chapter V

<sup>110</sup>See p. 40

Party without difficulty—and is, probably, expected to do so if the work he does is of some degree of responsibility. Thus, the dualism between Party and state machinery, with the theory of the eventual 'withering away' of the latter as an ideological expedient to stress the former's superiority, is vanishing. After the war, the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are united by a great experience and achievement won not against, as was the case in 1917, but under the leadership of the existing state machinery. The authority of the Party will be mainly based upon the fact that it has built the state which won the war.

The introduction of permanent professional titles of rank for the officers of the Army<sup>111</sup> was not merely, as with other intellectual professions, a question of ensuring systematic professional studies and efficiency, and of strengthening professional pride. Petty as the question may seem to the observer abroad, the description of the new ranks presented, indeed, some ideological problems. The description by mere function, from the 'commander of a platoon' to the 'army commander' did as well as any other from the administrative point of view. As regards relations to other armies, the original 'corps commander' might mean something much more distinct than the nebulous 'general' of various other armies. But, being a description by mere function, it did not essentially differ from that, say, of the 'rear-gunner' or 'navigator'—it denoted division of labour rather than subordination. When it was felt desirable to stress the latter, and to strengthen discipline, the traditional descriptions of army ranks seemed more suitable, and had been introduced for the various ranks from the lieutenant to the colonel as early as 1935. During the Civil War, some officers of the lower and middle ranks had fought on the side of the Reds. So their titles did not necessarily provoke hostile associations. Marshals were also introduced in 1935 for the simple reason that there had been none—apart from the Tsar himself—during the last pre-revolutionary period, so the title was not tainted. But the title 'general' or 'admiral' was something connected with Kornulov and Kolchak. When, in 1939, the highest commanders got titles 'equal' to those of their professional colleagues abroad this was a symptom of a changed approach to the traditions of the Army—and, in fact, to the continuity of national history in general.<sup>112</sup> Kolchak and Denikin had got their deserts, and might be forgotten, but the Army remembered Suvorov, Kutusov, who had fought for Tsarist Russia—it is true, not without disputes with the Tsars themselves—and even Prince Alexander Nevsky, the conqueror of the German invaders of 1242. Now their names are remembered in these of the highest orders of the Red Army. The rank distinctions are expressed in the traditional form of epaulettes, with the avowed aim of emphasizing the status of the officers as distinct from the men, and thus to strengthen their authority—and also the ambition of the men to become officers. During the war 'Guard' divisions were established. The title, which also involves higher

<sup>111</sup>See p. 40.

<sup>112</sup>See pp. 127-8.

pay for officers and ranks is not attached to certain privileged formations, but distributed as a reward for special bravery shown by any division. But it is connected with a certain symbolism especially with regard to the banners, which are intended to help in building up new regimental and divisional traditions. Throughout the Revolution, the Army was a main agency for shaping the new national outlook. It brought literacy to the village and educated that type of local activist without whom rural self government and co-operative agriculture could not work, especially during the last war it taught the Russian peasant and the ex peasant worker to manage modern machinery and to keep appointments to the minute. During the first twenty years of its existence it has taught the soldier to regard himself as the equal of his superiors, apart from the practical needs of subordination in service. Now the officers not only have epaulettes and incomparably higher pay, but also orderlies and separate clubs. The intention of emphasizing social stratification beyond the obvious needs of discipline is obvious. True, access to commissioned rank is open to every soldier who shows bravery and intelligence but by making use of that opportunity the soldier obviously changes his social status, and such a prospect is considered to be a most important incentive to devotion and study. The organs of defence are now a distinct professional body with a professional hierarchy and a distinct professional pride, of the masses, but also quite distinct from the masses of the Soviet people. The revival of the title of 'ministers'—instead of 'people's commissars' which was introduced in 1917 making a complete break with the tradition of their separate status—for the members of the Government, has been explicitly described as due expression of the increased importance of state organization.

### (c) *The Soviet Fatherland*

Original Marxism although strictly anti-chauvinistic, is not at all anti national. *In*ter nationalism, as distinct from *a* nationalism, supposes, in the word's true meaning the existence of nations. Marx and Engels, indeed, were much too much children of that progressive generation which cherished every tradition of the great French revolution to be blind about that aspect of history. The Communist Manifesto says that 'the proletariat must raise itself to the position of the national class, and constitute itself as the nation'. Lenin's saying after having taken power, 'now we are all defenders of the fatherland' would have met with full endorsement from Marx and Engels. The much misused phrase 'the proletarians have no fatherland, they have nothing to lose but their chains' is in its context, nothing but a somewhat rhetorical circumlocution for stating that those who feel themselves oppressed cannot wish their oppressors to be victorious in any war. This defeatist aspect of revolutionary Marxism was most strongly stressed by Lenin during the first World War, when he also wrote that article 'On the national pride

of the Great Russians' which Stalinist Russia is constantly quoting 'Yes, we are proud of all great things our nation has done, of all its cultural achievements, and most of all, of all the Russian men and women who heroically strove for the liberation of mankind. We are ashamed of the regime that oppresses our people as well as others, we are ashamed of the horrible things done in our people's name. Therefore, because we love our people, and because we hate its oppressors, we want to see them defeated. For this is the only way to win freedom for ourselves, the Great Russians, and for all the others who are oppressed by 'Tsarism'. This is plain speaking, and the representatives of the trend usually described as 'Vansittartism' may not like it. In the seventeenth century also many Englishmen would have been found who would have listened to such a voice. They were no worse Englishmen because they wished to overthrow the oppressors of the English people. Once their country was free they became the most fervent of patriots. So it was with the Bolsheviks once the Russian landlords and capitalists had been defeated.

All these are commonplaces which have to be stated so that we may have a starting point from which to describe later developments. It is quite possible that to some leaders of the Russian Revolution, to Trotsky for instance, Russia was nothing but a base from which to launch the struggle to achieve an abstract, non rational, ideal. To Lenin, good internationalist though he was, Russia was something more. She was *his* country which he loved as a patriot no less than as a Socialist. He who had furthered the defeat of her actual rulers and oppressors before the revolution, had now to encompass the defeat of her enemies. Not that they were only the enemies of Russia. Why should anyone outside Russia have run the risk of death and torture merely to defend a Russian national experiment against foreign intervention? The very fact of intervention proved that the issues at stake were not merely Russian. Nevertheless, it was a few thousand who died outside Russia, while there were millions who died on Russian soil—and for the Russian soil. The decree of the historic night 7 November, 1917, gave the soil to the peasants. It is true, this was, as it turned out, only a transitional phase. But in December 1935 another decree granted all the land they occupied to the *kolkhozes* in perpetuity. 'To die for the Mir',<sup>112</sup> this had been, 60 years before, the slogan of the young revolutionary intellectuals who went 'among the people'. Now, most of them were dead—but the Mir had the land, and up to date equipment not dreamt of by the young liberal revolutionaries. During the war, some millions of young men and women died for *their* land.

The ideological developments we have discussed merely emphasized this essential fact. The original oath of the Red Army man, introduced in 1918, declared his readiness to sacrifice all 'for the liberation of toiling mankind'. But it was in battle against the Russian Whites and the foreign interventionists that he was to prove his loyalty to this inter-

<sup>112</sup>The traditional Russian village-community

national ideal. In the Russia of Stalin, since 1936, the soldier swears simply to defend the Soviet fatherland. The average peasant recruit will understand this oath better. But to fulfil it may mean fighting on foreign soil to liberate the people of other lands if the safety of the Soviet fatherland demands it. The Soviet pilots fought no worse in Spain, in 1937, for having sworn the new oath. For them as well as for their fathers 20 years before, the defence of the new Russia and the defeat of foreign counter revolutionaries – potential aggressors against Bolshevik Russia, were merely different aspects of a single task. Only the emphasis was changed now that it had been proved beyond dispute that Russia herself, by her own efforts, could build a complete Socialist society. Hence, her participation in international affairs was to be regulated not by abstract ideological considerations, but by the need to ensure the security of the great experiment. There was no other cause for which the Russian peasant would have fought.

Most critics of the Soviet foreign policy of 1939-41<sup>114</sup> tend to forget this fact. The decision to await the German attack in 1941, and to concentrate all the efforts of policy on securing that the country should be in the best possible position to meet this attack when it came, meant the surrender of military initiative to Hitler, thus he could time the stroke as he chose, and so achieved enormous initial successes. But the decision meant, too, that behind the Soviet government a united nation and boundless national effort faced the direct threat to national life. Such a degree of national unity in a war the main burden of which the U.S.S.R. had to bear, would have been quite impossible but for Stalin's policy in 1939-41. Certainly the Soviet leaders could have followed an alternative policy. They might have summoned the Russian people to war by explaining to them that the Germans were meditating an attack on the U.S.S.R. They might have attempted to explain that the England of 1940-1 was different from the England of Munich and of the period of the Russo-Finnish war, and that the security of the U.S.S.R. demanded an Anglo-Soviet alliance against Germany, even if the Anglo-American help to Russia were restricted to such moderate dimensions as it was in fact during the first two years of the Soviet-German war, and even if there was so little readiness to co-ordinate Anglo-American with Soviet policies as during the Algerian and the Italian campaigns. But what popular enthusiasm could they have expected for such a war? The foundation of patriotism in the U.S.S.R. is the peasant's readiness to die for the new order. For that reason Soviet patriotism is essentially defensive. The new theory of the feasibility even of Communism in a single country merely describes this self-limitation.

The Revolution, originally based on the workers and a small active minority among the peasants, has now drawn into its orbit the bulk of the peasant millions – including the millions of industrial workers newly come from the village. So the official ideology has no longer to express

<sup>114</sup> Apart from the fact that they very naively judge Soviet policies from the point of view of the interests of English policy of the time.



the Marxist conceptions of a small minority, it must express something that the average peasant can understand and will defend. But, besides the peasants the official ideology must appeal, at the other end of the social ladder, to the old *intelligentsia*, to descendants of the former middle classes and even of the former nobility, whether they may serve in the army, in the professions, or as village teachers. They had to be convinced that it was *their fatherland*, everlasting Russia, that they were called on to die for. The need to win them over and the position of the new peasantry form the red thread we are following through all the developments described in this book. It was not so important that the industrial workers should find all the features of the familiar Marxist terminology in the description of the Soviet fatherland. They would defend their revolution in any case and at any price. It was more important that those who, during the revolution itself, had stood aside should recognize in the country they were called to defend their old beloved Russia risen anew.

Hence the great stress on all forms of national tradition that are not directly opposed to the ideals of the Russian Revolution. To acknowledge that the introduction of Christianity into Russia, in the tenth century, meant a step forward is, in fact, sound Marxism, as opposed to shallow rationalism. The victories of Prince Alexander Nevsky over the thirteenth-century Teutonic invaders were celebrated in spite of his later canonization by the Orthodox Church. In this case Stalin can point to an authentic quotation from Marx on the historical importance of that battle, not merely to the obvious topical nature of the issue and even of the battlefield (Lake Peipus). There were also good historical reasons to glorify Peter the Great who, like Stalin, had achieved a 'Revolution from above' and opened Russia to Western civilization—a policy for which the reactionary mystic panslavists had never forgiven him. Most of the nineteenth-century writers and artists, although not Socialists, had been distinctly progressive in their views and so were the more suitable to help the former liberal *intelligentsia* in finding their way into the new order. Tolstoy in *War and Peace* as well as in *Anna Karenina*, expressed the forces to be liberated by the Revolution in its definite, Stalinist, form and he did it much better than most Socialist writers except Gorki.

But there were more complicated problems than the rejection of mere narrow-mindedness in appreciating the non Socialist parts of the Russian historical tradition. Important strands of this tradition had not been progressive at all, even if judged by the issues of their time, the only true Marxist standard. The army of Minin and Pojarsky who, in 1612, drove out the Polish invaders, had defeated a peasant insurrection, and the compromise ending the struggle had established the Romanov dynasty. In spite of this fact Minin and Pojarsky are in Stalinist, as in Romanov, Russia, celebrated as national liberators. To drive Napoleon, the traitor of the French Revolution, from Russian soil had been a wonderful achievement and was celebrated as such by Russian progressive

tradition, including Tolstoy. But the professional pride of the Army apart, it is questionable whether revolutionary Russia had any reason to be proud of the fact that Marshal Suvorov had led tens of thousands of Russian peasant sons to glory and death on Italian and Swiss battlefields where no Russian interest was at stake but solely the interest of Russian absolutism in the defeat of the French Revolution. In all these cases recent Soviet propaganda glorifies feats that Lenin, in the article previously mentioned had not included in his enumeration of the glories of the Russian past. There is hardly any important fact or figure in Russian history, apart from distinct reactionaries like Catherine II, the enslaver of the peasants, and, of course, the last Romanovs, that would not be appreciated and celebrated by Russian historians of today. In this respect the writing of history is more nationalist in Russia today than it would have been even in the hands of liberal pre-revolutionary historians like Klyuchevski.

There is a certain difficulty in squaring the appreciation of a past mainly shaped by the Great Russians<sup>121</sup> with the fact that the U.S.S.R. is a federation and therefore, wishes to encourage the national pride of all the nationalities of which it is composed. Undoubtedly, the solution of this problem involves in Soviet propaganda and education, some selection among the national traditions of each of the constituent nationalities. As regards the non-Russians the factors in their history making for eventual union are emphasized—as opposed to some reminiscences which, say a Ukrainian separatist nationalist would cherish. Belittling the experiences of these nationalities under the Tsarist regime is already precluded by the sharp antagonism of Soviet historians to this regime itself, at least in its latter stages. It was not until the death of Peter I that the non-Russian nationalities were really subjected to oppression, and there is little difficulty in demonstrating that the oppressors of the non-Russian nationalities were the oppressors of the Great Russian people also. Those traditions in Great Russian history which the Soviet state continues have been friendly to the fellow nationalities, and the life of a man like Taras Shevchenko, the great Ukrainian poet and nationalist, was a constant struggle against national oppression as well as against serfdom. To see such a man now being glorified as one of the great cultural heroes of all the peoples of a 200-million Empire may mean, for Ukrainian pride, more than the realization of all the promises of a puppet 'independence' under Pilsudskian Polish or Hitlerite German supremacy. As regards the smaller nations of the federation—Georgians, Armenians, Uzbeks, Tadzhiks and the rest—the possibility of submitting the achievements of their national culture to the public opinion of the whole Union represents a greater national success than even 'independent' nations of 2-3 million, and at a comparable stage of development, normally

<sup>121</sup> And the history of Russia is the history of Great Russian hegemony apart from the Kiev period which preceded the division of Great Russians and Ukrainians (a fact often forgotten by Ukrainian nationalists)

achieve nowadays. On the other hand this multi national feature of Soviet patriotism, its appeal to some hundred nations most of which had been oppressed in Tsarist Russia, sets sharp limits to the assimilation of pre-revolutionary Great Russian traditions by Soviet ideology an identification even with all liberal traditions within Tsarist Russia would, quite apart from the feelings of the Russian workers, mean repelling sympathies amongst the non Russian nations which the Soviet régime can enjoy just because it is *not* the heir of Tsarist Russia. This is a point many a friendly British observer of present Russia is likely to forget in his tendency to remember the Ally of the first World War.

What, then, is the essential conception of the Soviet fatherland? Is it 'everlasting Russia' or is it 'the bulwark of international Socialist revolution'? It is neither or both. It is the embodiment of the revolutionary achievements of the Russian workers and peasants as well as of the formerly oppressed nations. It is the realization of a principle which, as the Russians believe, embodies a great message for mankind. But, at the same time, it is the consciousness of a historical community of destiny. This community is strongly stressed as an achievement of pre revolutionary, and as an essential feature of post revolutionary Russia. It is not merely a group of peoples which, by some historical accident, achieved a Socialist revolution at a certain moment: the fact that they did so is regarded as the result of their *common history*. The independence which they defended against foreign aggressors in 1242, 1612 and 1812 is regarded as essentially identical with that defended in 1918-20 and in 1941-5.

It is not a mere Russian fatherland: official history is taught as 'History of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.' 'Great Russian national pride' is not ashamed of letting this history, according to the historical facts, begin with states which the later Georgians and Central Asiatics had formed about 1000 B.C., 1500 years before much can be learned about the then barbarian Slavs (though ordinarily every legitimate attempt is made to put Slav pre history in its due light). In due course the Slavs play the central, although not the exclusively dominating, role in the explanation of history. In the present U.S.S.R., in addition to the mother tongue, thorough knowledge of the Russian language as the official medium of communication is required of all candidates for higher education. This fact, although it does not exclude equality of all partners of the federation, makes for a further limitation of the scope of the Union. No people that has not shared the experiences of the other partners in some degree can easily be expected to join. New partners in the Union with a past as rich as that of Great Russia—say a Soviet Germany or China—would simply destroy the distinctive character of the great experiment. In the U.S.S.R. patriotism is multi national, it is not based merely on Great Russian nationalism. It embraces all the 100 nationalities of what is a continent rather than a country. But its internationalism, that is to say its conviction that it is based on a feeling of world-wide proletarian solidarity, is similar to the internationalism of

Jefferson who wrote in 1812 'The event of our experiment is to show whether man can be trusted with self government. The eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on us with anxiety as their only hope, and on such a theatre for such a case we must suppress all smaller passions and local considerations' <sup>116</sup> Consciousness of international responsibilities works, in such a state of mind, as an additional argument for national unity. But Jefferson did not think of exporting the American conception of democracy by force of arms to other nations. Only a decade after Jefferson wrote, a successor of his prohibited European reactionaries from interfering with the fate of those American countries which had followed the lead of the U.S.A. A century later, after the great experiment had proved highly successful, another of Jefferson's successors entered a world war with the intention of 'making the world safe for democracy'. Certainly Wilson did not force democracy on any country. Replace 'democracy' by 'Socialism', and you have what really is internationalist in present-day Soviet patriotism.

The object of Soviet patriotism, as of any other, is a *state*—not a mere partisan movement. This state is a revolutionary state. It rejects any responsibility for the former *state* as strongly as it emphasizes the continuity of the historical destinies of the *peoples*. To acknowledge internal achievements of the pre-revolutionary regime more recent than those of Peter the Great would be impossible except by sacrificing the continuity of the new fatherland with the former oppositional and revolutionary movement. But continuity with the former state is accepted in so far as the territory and the external strength of the community of the peoples of the former Tsarist Empire are concerned. When the *History of the Communist Party of the C.P.S.U.* <sup>117</sup> was written a main criticism against the Tsarist regime had been based upon its inability to defend national independence against the Germans, and after the defeat of the Japanese Stalin proclaimed that 'we men of the older generation have waited for 40 years for the day when the "dark blot" of 1904 would be wiped out. In that speech, of 2 September, 1945, criticism of the Tsarist régime is merely implied by comparisons with the much more successful way in which the Soviet regime dealt with the Japanese aggression of its own day. It may be questioned whether Stalin, or any other Russian Bolshevik, 40 years ago could have had such preoccupations: defeatism was the common slogan not only of the Socialists, but even of all the sincere Liberals, and was 10 years later regarded by Lenin as the criterion of an honest Socialist. Defeatism, as mentioned above, <sup>118</sup> was not a principle but a tactic which had served its purpose once it had brought the opposition the opportunity to prove its superior ability to defend the national interest. There is no contradiction in terms when a former defeatist proudly proclaims that

<sup>116</sup>Collection of Jefferson's writings, *Democracy* by S. H. Padover, New York, 1930, p. 43.

<sup>117</sup>See p. 173.

<sup>118</sup>See p. 125.

he has succeeded in making good the defeat, but certainly by doing so he proclaims the continuity of the state in relation to foreign powers. If the continuity with the former revolutionary movement is emphasized, its defeatism will be defended from the standpoint of the national interest,<sup>119</sup> but certainly, from this standpoint, the state is not conceived as a mere organ of internal class rule that loses its identity by a change in the ruling class.<sup>120</sup> Actually, Stalin had dropped that concept by November 1942, when, speaking of the German leader—probably with the intention of encouraging revolution in Germany—he said 'The Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the German state remain'. It may be said that such expressions are mere popular appeals. Certainly, Stalin did not intend to promise the Germans more than an independent state of their own, but it was a promise which was kept even though the frontiers were drastically revised. And speaking of the Japanese, when he said 'Under whatever régime we live, we Russians need free access to the Pacific Ocean', he was stating a self-evident truth.

Is Soviet patriotism expansionist? The question is essentially different from the question the Webbs put at the end of their book: will Soviet Communism, as 'a new civilization', spread? The spreading of a civilization is the process by which the most essential of its elements are integrated with other national civilizations. Expansion, as distinct from mere spread, implies destruction or absorption of other civilizations. Anyone who has lived in the U.S.S.R. during the critical years will hardly doubt that her civilization is the outcome of a distinctly national achievement. Quite apart from whether some underlying conceptions of Socialism and of the way to realize it may spread to other parts of the world, this special civilization is necessarily restricted to those peoples who have shared in the common destinies of the Tsarist Empire and the struggle against it. Such a definition does not necessarily imply any sanctity of the 1914- or 1939-frontiers which, like most of the East European and Asiatic frontiers, cut across ethnographical and cultural borders, leaving a number of problems open that might be solved in one way or another way, according to the material strength of the forces backing either solution. Such phrases as Churchill's 'what we have we hold' and its counterpart, coined by the Bolsheviks themselves, 'no annexations' actually contradict the principle of national self-determination as realized in the Russian recognition of the independence of Poland and Finland, and the recognition of Chinese rights in Port Arthur<sup>121</sup> as well as in the expansion of Soviet

<sup>119</sup> Cf. the review of Professor Tarlé's book on the Crimean War in *Istorichesky Zhurnal*, 1945 No. 3.

<sup>120</sup> A concept which for some time has been defended of Soviet theorists on International Law where its application makes nonsense because of its (erroneous) implications on the issue of the Tsarist debts. See my *Soviet Legal Theories* pp. 276-8.

<sup>121</sup> Continuation of concessions to weaker nations by a Great Power which has itself overcome its own weakness, is likely to depend on the continued friendliness of those nations. Independence was originally granted to the Finns and Poles, and concessions in China and Iran relinquished so as to make friends, and certainly not to give power to Mannerheim and Pilsudski nor to encourage anti-Soviet combinations and intrigues.

territory after the last war even beyond the 1914 borders wherever the Soviet could expect such strong local support as in the Carpatho-Ukraine, apart from local demands of strategy as in Königsberg. It is most natural that recent Soviet writers<sup>122</sup> compare with pride these recent expansions of Soviet territory with Lenin's explanation of the Brest Litovsk treaty 'we have sacrificed space in order to win time' and Stalin's statement of 1930 'we do not demand any additional territory, but we are not prepared to sacrifice even a pace of our own', as reflecting the relations of strength prevailing at the respective times. Unless some sanctity is ascribed to pre War frontiers, such comparisons need not to be explained in an expansionist sense as long as the actual use made of the increased external strength can be derived from principles that imply certain clear limits to expansion. Such limits are actually given by the derivation of Soviet civilization from the struggle within and against the Tsarist Empire.

The easiest way of cultural expansion, beyond those limits, would be Panslavism. But Panslavism, if an acknowledged element in Soviet patriotism, would repel the feelings of the many non-Slavonic peoples of the U.S.S.R. So it would rather weaken her internal coherence. Even abroad Panslavism does not correspond to the actual distribution of pro-Soviet sympathies: there can be no doubt that the Rumanian people would be much more inclined than the Poles to join the U.S.S.R. It is quite true that the Soviet relies on the sympathies of the Slavs. But people in this country who took a great interest in the various 'Slavonic Congresses' held in Moscow forgot that an International Jewish Congress was held in Moscow, too, at almost the same time.<sup>123</sup> There is no reason in Soviet ideology why the sufferings of oppressed Slavs should be more or less deserving of sympathy, than those of any other people, though pro-Russian sympathies outside the U.S.S.R. are more easily established from the standpoint of the nationalism of Slavonic peoples. But no acceptance, by the Soviet, of a Panslavist ideology is needed to convince the majority of the Czech or Bulgar people that the U.S.S.R. is their strongest and most reliable friend, provided that they resist the forces of reaction. Within Russian national tradition, Panslavism has been connected with the extreme right wing religious mystical outlook. All progressives in Russia since Peter the Great's days have been 'Westerners', that is they have tried to apply Western thought and Western technical achievements to Russian conditions. They were opposed to Panslavism with its mystical conceptions—derived from Byzantium—

There is no use in the formal statement that a right once granted implies its use for any purpose. The whole case for small nations demanding concessions from stronger Powers is that the latter would prefer sympathetic neighbours rather than insist upon their formal rights, and when a Great Power gives up its imperial birthright, it may expect that such newly granted rights are not used against it. Certainly a Great Power, when making concessions to a weaker neighbour, makes such concessions only to that neighbour and not to whichever competing Great Power may succeed in drawing that neighbour into its sphere of influence.

<sup>122</sup>For example Levin in *Mirovoye Khozyaystvo Mirovaya Politika* 1946 Nos 1-2

<sup>123</sup>*Pravda* 25 August 1941

of the 'Third Rome' It was Masaryk<sup>124</sup> who understood this point more clearly than most other Western philosophers He was the son of a Slavonic people to whose Western traditions the ideas and policies of Russian progressives, but not the Byzantine mysticism, was bound to appeal The Bolsheviks moved the capital back to Moscow, not to get rid of Westernism, but to bring Westernism to the broad masses of the Russian people It was the opposite, but also the complement of Peter's action he had moved from barbarian Moscow to the new built capital, to begin with the Westernization of a small *élite* But Peter's new capital became the centre of Lenin's revolution, which brought Western achievements to old Russia Thus Bolshevik Russia has won the indisputable leadership of the Slav world including the Catholic West But leadership is not a synonym for absorption

Apart from security nothing of importance for the internal development of the U S S R is to be gained by any expansion in Europe East of the line Berlin Prague Vienna there are no industrial assets that could substantially increase the Soviet's present economic potential But to incorporate highly industrialized Central European states, with correspondingly strong labour movements of the Western type would involve destroying those essential national features that make for the internal coherence of the present U S S R, composed as the latter is of people sharing the inheritance of the Eastern wing of antique civilization (in its Byzantine or Islamic forms) The demands put forward by the U S S R during and after the war might sound strange to those who regard the Western frontiers enforced upon the Soviet state at the moment of its greatest weakness as some 'natural right' to be protected, say, against the desires of the Ukrainian peasants or the Riga workers, by the Atlantic charter But they revealed a very careful and conscious limitation of the territorial demands of the U S S R as opposed to the moral and economic influence she certainly, with good reason, hopes to exercise over large parts of Europe through her achievements The Soviet leaders realize that if they were to go beyond certain limits they would risk losing more in the attempt to assimilate a heterogeneous population than they would gain by territorial expansion

However, all this holds true only apart from the question of security, and only as long as there are other alternatives to hostile encirclement than incorporation The real danger in the tenacious Western opposition to the demand of the U S S R for the 1941 frontiers and in the present opposition to the left wing régimes established in her border countries lies in the fact that, from the Soviet point of view, this opposition can only be explained by a desire to build up 'hulwarks against Bolshevism' and to appeal to those elements in Europe towards whom Hitler directed his anti Bolshevik appeal<sup>125</sup> If there is any danger to Polish national

<sup>124</sup>See his book *The Spirit of Russia* London 1919

<sup>125</sup>See for example the Baltic bourgeois nationalists referred to by a Stockholm correspondent in *The Times* 31 March 1943 and the whole history of the Katyn case in April 1943

independence in the future, it comes from those who have encouraged the belief of Polish reactionaries that their state may have a future as such a bulwark, and that there can be a place in the neighbourhood of the U S S R for people who participated in Goebbels' propaganda. If the U S S R should interpret the policy of its present allies as a desire to 'build bulwarks against Bolshevism' self preservation would oblige her to 'build bulwarks' too. And within her ideology she would find some arguments for justifying such a course. Communist ideology, in its present Stalinist form, is certainly not bound to a conception of international revolution brought about by the territorial expansion of the U S S R. But it is also not incompatible with such a conception. Should incorporation into the U S S R prove the only practicable alternative to some expanded 'Darlanism',<sup>126</sup> say in the countries of the former Hapsburg monarchy and to restoration of the royal military dictatorships in the Balkans, the U S S R could count on the sympathy of even the progressive and Socialist elements in Central Europe who, otherwise, would prefer to look for a way towards Socialism of their own, collaborating with, but not incorporated in, the U S S R. If the worst should come to the worst, and the post war European order should be menaced by the possibility of a Third World War, the policies of the U S S R as well as of all sincere Socialists in Europe would be dictated by the choice of 'whether to be hammer or anvil', even at the price of sacrificing the national traditions which they cherish. But this would be a loss for all of them, even if unavoidable. No one would deplore it more than Stalinist Russia, which wants to be the Socialist home of the Russian peoples—neither more nor less.

It may be remarked that subjective desires, of the Russians as well as of other peoples, are not decisive. Their demand for security in such an insecure position as is theirs after the victorious end of World War II<sup>127</sup> may be said to force upon them policies that are bound to result in a struggle for world domination, whether they like it or not. Their natural desire to see friendly regimes in neighbouring countries may be interpreted as promoting movements intended to destroy the foundations of Anglo-Saxon civilization and as a gradual approach to world domination. It may provoke countermeasures<sup>128</sup> which may enforce upon the U S S R and its European sympathizers actual expansion of the Soviet system. In the age of the atomic bomb it may be difficult to achieve strategic borders sufficient to protect the hearth of the Russian lands and to make an end of 'capitalist encirclement' unless the Russians succeed in uniting the major half of the world under their leadership and by doing so should actually threaten the security of the capitalist Powers. Even if it were assumed that the incorporation of China or India were sufficient to give the U S S R a sense of security, it may be questioned whether the capitalist Powers could accept the loss of those markets

<sup>126</sup>See an article in the *American Mercury* quoted by Mr William Dwight Whitney in a letter to the Editor of *The Times* 29 March 1943

<sup>127</sup>See p. 92



without a struggle for life. In any case, expansion on such a scale—as distinct from the admission of some Roumania or Bulgaria—could not fail to deprive the U S S R of its character as a common achievement of the peoples of the former Tsarist Empire. Once that decisive step were taken, why stop short of the incorporation of Japan, Germany or France?

A separate book would be a more suitable place to answer these questions than some remarks at the end of a chapter, but obviously this book would remain rather abstract unless we attempted to give at least some sketch of an answer. I should not go to the length of describing all the suppositions of our imagined opponent as devoid of reality, but I should regard it as a distinctly pessimistic attitude to take their reality for granted. Suppose that all countries outside the U S S R were united in a political bloc definitely hostile to the U S S R<sup>128</sup> and suppose that the leading Power in that bloc were convinced that it could not survive without control of the colonial and semi colonial countries. World War III would be likely not because the U S S R needs additional raw materials or external markets (it certainly does not) but because it would be bound to expect such a bloc to answer the next economic depression by an attempt to 'deliver' the peoples of the U S S R from that 'totalitarian' régime that prevents similar exploitation and forms a potential rallying point for resistance elsewhere. No reasonable politician would be inclined to delay measures likely to improve his chances in an inevitable struggle to the time when his country would be confronted by a consolidated bloc of nine tenths of humanity. But we must remark that the suppositions of such an argument in themselves are hypothetical. The British Commonwealth of Nations must be supposed to have become a dependency of the American Empire, the Americans themselves must be supposed incapable of introducing some kind of planned economics (which would spare them the need for using the atomic bombs in an attempt to establish the American Era outside the Americas) during the next generation's life time, and the access of the numerous peoples of the East to political individuality must be supposed impossible except in the framework of a capitalist order of the Anglo Saxon pattern. Should the first or the third supposition fail to be realized a system of more than two actual Great Powers,<sup>129</sup> and therefore some balance of power, will remain. In order to feel secure, a Great Power need not then monopolize at least half of the

<sup>128</sup>This is the actual danger involved in the activities of the propagandists of a federalism intended to become world wide (as distinct from avowedly local and regional federation which is a purely practical issue) even if they should not go to the length of Professor Clyde Eagleton who proclaimed the need for an international federation to become universal, even through coercion of dissidents at the earliest possible moment. See my *Federalism in Central and Eastern Europe* published 1945 in the International Library for Sociology and Social Reconstruction Chapter XXI. In more recent times suggestions to reconstruct UNO on a narrower basis and without the power of veto have become fashionable. The problem of creating international security against the threat of atomic war has been answered by suggesting an American-dominated world-state, thus providing the propagandist slogans for that very atomic war.

<sup>129</sup>Of course I speak of actual independent Great Powers not of theoretical members of the Big Four, Big Five, etc.

world's resources, but simply avoid political isolation, and equal any conceivable opponent, or combination of opponents. Security in that sense may be taken for granted by the U.S.A., and also by the U.S.S.R. once all its internal resources are developed, while it is obvious that the preservation of the Great Power status of the British Empire, as well as the gradual access of China (and later India) to such status, depends upon the possibility of manoeuvring between a number of World Powers.

Peace for the U.S.S.R. depends upon getting the time needed for completely developing its resources. To catch up with the American monopoly of the atomic bomb is the minor part of that task, for equilibrium in that respect depends not merely on the control of means of annihilation<sup>130</sup> but also on the capacity of a system to answer those threats by suitable means of preserving popular morale, by dispersing industries etc. The actually decisive issue is, for the U.S.S.R., to populate and to develop Siberia on a standard, say, equal to that of the U.S.A. whose natural conditions are very similar. It is difficult to estimate the probable duration of the period of transition before the new equilibrium will be established but there may be no undue optimism in expecting the population of the U.S.S.R. during this century to increase at about the same rate as the American did during the last century with the greater opportunities for encouraging births involved in planned economies compensating for the lack of immigration. After a generation or so, the heart of the Eurasian continent will be populated by half a milliard of people and the power of its example as well as the definite closure of the northward emigration from China will have induced the Chinese people to find specific and definite forms of its national economics fitting the needs of the new time. Thus one of the most dangerous centres of conflict, and also the danger of a two-power system in world politics, will have gone. Progress will not have come to a standstill in the rest of the world, and a new equilibrium between the Eurasian and the Anglo Saxon civilizations will have been created. Whether they will actually have approached a similar pattern of economic life, by different approaches, or definitely carry two different forms of human civilization into the next century will not matter so much when it is no longer necessary for either of them to be afraid of the other.

True, the evolution just described is a mere chance, no certainty. But only pessimists could describe it as a mere Utopia. Certainly it forms the aim of Soviet policies for the next decades. In the context of our study it is essential to realize the ideological implications of a policy orientated towards internal reconstruction and the rapid increase of the population of the heart of the home country: national pride, not the message which the nation may have for its neighbours, will dominate the intellectual life of the next decades.

<sup>130</sup>Of all the means of annihilation available at a certain time, it is rather naive to expect someone to be able to use atomic bombs and at the same time to complain of his opponent's using, say, poison gas.

## The Conception of History

THE EVOLUTION OF SOVIET patriotism has not only influenced the interpretation of pre 1917 history, it has also forced the Soviet theorists to reconsider fundamental problems of history in general. This aspect of the recent development of thought in the U S S R is one of the most interesting, and so it may be worth while to dwell a little on it.<sup>111</sup>

The Marxist conception of history was formulated, and achieved its main triumphs, in opposition to the traditional 'explanation' of historical development by the enumeration of the feats of 'great men' and by the description of the ideas influencing their actions. In opposition to such an 'idealistic' conception, Marxism stresses the importance of the objective structure of society based on the material conditions under which men produce their means of livelihood. The objective structure of society influences the action of men both by influencing their ideas and by setting limits to the realization of their ideas. Marx and Engels, unlike some of their popularizers particularly in Germany,<sup>112</sup> never thought of denying the fact that 'men make their history themselves'. Nor did they disregard the importance of historical personalities and of the ideas that move them. They considered it the task of sociology to explain how these ideas and these personalities could arise in a certain period. But a vulgar travesty of Marxism was propagated in Russia before and during the first years after 1917 under the title of 'economic materialism'. Marxist theory was misused to imply the existence of some automatism by which economic conditions produce 'history' of their own accord, with the men and their ideas acting as mere marionettes.

From the point of view of Bolshevism this version of Marxism has various serious defects. It tends to produce fatalism, a tendency to look for the inevitable causes of defeat rather than to avert it. It may serve as a pretext for avoiding revolutionary action 'for which, evidently, the historical conditions are not yet ripe', and it has fulfilled this function with German as well as with Russian right wing Socialists. The student of the development of German 'orthodox Marxism' of the Kautskian type, for example, can hardly avoid the impression that the desire to

<sup>111</sup>The reader may find a survey of the historical discussion in 1936-7 and of the Russian literature on it, in an article by the present author in *Zeitschrift fuer Sozialforschung* vol VIII (1938) No 1/2. There are many appreciations of the results—as distinct from the course—of the discussion in English. All of them of course are influenced by the writer's individual point of view, the most interesting will be found in the various recent writings of Professor Pares.

<sup>112</sup>But there were exceptions (mainly the writings of Mehring) in Germany too while we are to learn, on the other hand of Russian vulgarizations differing greatly from the sober writings of Pickhanov.

find such pretexts was an important factor of the development of these popular misconceptions of Marxism. Lenin was, of course, aware that at a given place at a given time the conditions for a successful Socialist revolution may be lacking. He did not share the adventurous attitude of those adherents of 'permanent revolution' who, in such a case, would simply face defeat in the hope that every<sup>133</sup> temporary defeat would contribute to final victory. In such circumstances Leninism does not confine itself to mere passive onlooking, but adopts its tactics to the objective conditions. For example, it may for a certain period and in a certain country be necessary to struggle for democracy rather than for Socialism. Bolshevism has grown strong on such tactics. But it had to pay for them by repeated internal crises when the time came to drop the merely democratic slogan and adopt a Socialist policy. This happened on the eve of the October revolution in 1917, and on the eve of the 1928-33 revolution. 'Economic materialism', at the eve of a revolution, may serve as a pretext for 'right wing deviation', for shrinking from action. After the event it may serve as a weapon of 'leftist deviation', what had grown in contradiction to 'clear' Marxist dogma could not be Socialism at all. The fact that economic materialism lent itself to these heterodox interpretations, most of them in the Trotskyist sense, was a sufficient reason for the Stalinists to wage an energetic war 'on the historical front'.

'Economic materialism' had further undesirable consequences. If men and ideas are mere figure heads it is hardly worth while to study them. Children will be taught—and, indeed, were taught for the first fifteen years after the revolution—about 'empty sociological boxes', to use Stalin's critical expression. The children would get some impression of the general conditions of life during a certain period. Historical personalities and facts would be mentioned, at the best, quite by the way, to be remembered or forgotten according to the pupil's personal desires (and it is not difficult to imagine the personal desires even of a Soviet secondary schoolboy or girl). It was very pleasant, and I personally could never visit such a school without envying these young people who got a much more vivid impression of the conditions of former times and were much less tortured by examinations on 'dry facts' than I had been, when at school. The serious drawback of this type of historical education is that it results in ignorance of essential facts. Also it must not be forgotten that in the provincial secondary schools which foreigners had less opportunity of visiting even the pleasant features of the original Soviet method were not unlikely to be distorted into wretched caricatures, with the pupils learning nothing but empty phrases. In 1934 when the need to give youth a more thorough picture of their country's

<sup>133</sup>No Marxist and least of all Marx himself, would deny that in *certain* circumstances defeat after heroic resistance may be the best contribution the workers' movement of a given country could make to final victory. For example, I can hardly imagine any serious Marxist criticizing the attitude of the Austrian workers in February 1934 (as distinct from the previous Austrian Socialist policies that had practically reduced the chances of success to nil), as opposed to those of the German Socialists in 1932 and 1933.

history was strongly felt, Stalin, Kirov, and Shdanov began to drive against the 'empty sociological boxes' by criticizing the existing and proposed historical text books

Now, among all the 'empty sociological boxes' popular with the first Soviet interpreters of history there was one that had been developed 40 years before<sup>134</sup> on Russian soil and that proved especially dangerous to the real understanding of Russian history. If, about 1900, there were any feudal or semi feudal states in Europe, it was certainly Tsarist Russia. But for good reasons which we need not examine here, the struggle against Tsarist Russia had to be fought under the leadership of a party, working class at least according to its own theory and under the banner of the Marxist ideology which had been originally developed to satisfy the needs of the class struggle between industrial workers and capitalists.<sup>135</sup> In consequence the tendency arose among Russian progressive historians to interpret the purely feudal past in the light of the present, 'to reflect the proletarian class struggle into the past', as one extremist representative of this tendency declared. Even apart from such nonsense the general tendency to look for economic explanations, and the inability of most historians to understand the Marxist conception of productive relations, produced quite a number of very primitive travesties of history. Even the great Klyuchevsky called a twelfth century Russian law book a 'codex of capitalism'<sup>136</sup> because this law book, in its general character very close to the old Saxon laws in this country, took a special interest in trade (especially in slaves) and included laws about bankruptcy, commercial companies, etc. If an outstanding liberal historian could write such things it is not difficult to imagine what was produced by the second rank popularizers of Marxism during the first years of the Soviet régime.

But where could capitalism be found in ancient Tsarist Russia? Once the question was put in this way it was not difficult to answer. As in all countries in a similar stage of development, the Russian landlords, since the sixteenth century, had been in alliance with the merchants. This alliance, as in other countries, facilitated the development from feudal anarchy to an absolutist state. One had only to over emphasize this point to come to statements like that of Pokrovsky that commercial capital in Russia had shaped the law of serfdom, the serf holding manor and the Russian autocracy, and that the Tsarist crown was a mere ornament covering the merchants' rule.

<sup>134</sup>The theory of Russian merchant capitalism is as old as the Marxist fashion among Russian intellectuals including such then Liberals as Tugan Baranovsky. But it ought to be noted that the German Kautsky has supplied this as many other slogans of economic vulgarization to Marxism.

<sup>135</sup>There is a case to be made as has been done by Arthur Rosenberg in his *History of Bolshevism* (London 1934) for interpreting Marxism at least the radical trend represented by Marx himself and Lenin by the conditions of the struggle in a semi-feudal country, in spite of all the studies of Marx on English capitalism. For us here, this problem is unimportant in any case Marxism intends to be a proletarian anti capitalist ideology.

<sup>136</sup>*Russian History* (Russian edition of 1916-18, vol. 1 p. 282)

From this point of view it was difficult to understand what progressive people had fought for during the 200 years preceding the 1917 revolution—the last generation apart, most pre 1905 progressive thought in Russian politics, art and science had centred around the achievement of something analogous to the French or American revolution. But if Russia had been a capitalist country all along it would hardly have been worth while to fight against such great odds merely in order to transform that capitalism into its somewhat more up-to-date form, industrial capitalism. When the ruling party tried to stress its historical links with all progressive thought during the preceding generations, instead of merely condemning those generations for not having been orthodox Bolsheviks, the description of the former ruling system as 'merchant capitalism' had to be dropped, along with other, similar, simplifications. Apart from this political interest, what remained of Marxism as a sociological theory of history, if the standard of the present were simply to be applied to the past?

So the past was reinstated—in so far as this past had been progressive by the standards of its own times and had contributed to forming the present outlook of the Soviet fatherland. Even Christianity was not excluded, however unpleasant a mere historical appreciation of tenth to fifteenth century Christianity might have been for some Russian 'godless' agitators of the more primitive kind. In some cases recent Soviet historians evidently go beyond the limits of merely correcting mechanistic statements. Take for example the unification of the Great Russian territory, during the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, under the rule of the Great Princes of Moscow. Tsarist 'patriotic' historians had ascribed this achievement to the personal endeavours of these princes who, with the possible exception of Dmitry Donskoy, were personally quite insignificant. Progressive historians—liberal as well as Socialist—had answered such explanations by pointing to the objective, and especially the economic factors that had made for the success of the Moscow princes against all competitors. Recent Soviet historians are more inclined to stress the objective need for a unification of the Great Russian territory, felt by all classes of the Russian society of that time. In spite of all the sharpness of these polemics it is hardly possible to see an essential contradiction between the two last mentioned positions. In fifteenth century Russia, as in Tudor England, as in the France of Louis XI or Bismarck's Germany, strong forces were at play that would strengthen any power efficiently working for unity. But why Moscow? Why not Tver or Vladimir, not to speak of Novgorod? In answering such questions the 'purely economic' method, if avoiding mechanistic extremes, can make highly valuable contributions.

There is one issue on which the interpretation of the Russian past is of the very highest importance, if we are to understand the present. During the last two centuries of the Tsarist Empire, Russian thought was sharply divided as to whether Peter I was to be regarded as the man who established the foundations of modern civilization in Russia, or as

the man who destroyed the old, mystical, Holy Russia with all her spiritual values. The former was the contention of the 'Westernizers', from mere liberal landlords to most modern Socialists, the latter that of the Slavophiles and of all people who stood for mysticism and sentiment.

The facts are sufficiently clear. Peter was, apart from Stalin, the most thorough of all those Russian rulers who attempted a 'revolution from above'. Himself the friend of William III, he tried to turn Russia into a modern state on the contemporary Western model. He did not fulfil all his intentions. Shortly after his death the serf holding aristocracy won a monopoly of political power. The very factories that Peter had established were soon to employ mere serf labour. But, at an enormous cost, which the toiling masses of the people had to bear, Peter succeeded in securing for Russia a certain amount of modern technique and administration. Thus Peter made his nation a Great Power and thereby saved Russia from the fate of China and India. Even so, Russia had her Gandhi, in the shape of Tolstoy. But she could afford to celebrate him as her greatest artist, and could disregard him as a political personality. Lenin and Stalin, on the other hand, were to get more hopeful jobs in the workshop of History than Sunyatsen and Jawaharlal Nehru.

One may like or dislike a personality such as Peter or Stalin, and there are arguments in favour of either taste. The price paid for the speedy reconstruction of a backward country must, in any case, be high, and a 'revolution from above' has little regard for freedom of criticism. Those who would like to make a case against the living Stalin will prefer to speak about a personality who is merely indirectly 'in the news'. So, when reading historical writings 'on Peter', one must sometimes ask whether it is really about Peter that post 1917 Soviet historians were writing. Even if that were always clear, argument on the subject would be difficult. For the argument is fundamentally about ethical values. There is no absolute standard for comparison of the relative values of Christian mysticism, or Marxist orthodoxy, with national independence and the capacity of the nation to realize any values. Trotsky's saying, 'Do what you ought and let come what must come' is as little refutable as any other theological statement. But it is not surprising that Lenin as well as Stalin stood with those who accepted Peter's work without which their own could never have been done. Even so it must not be thought that the Petrine reforms are praised uncritically by present Russian historians.

In pre-revolutionary Russia, the 'Westernizers' liked to celebrate—and to interpret—Peter as some kind of liberal reformer. They did so mainly to bait the reigning Tsar, who certainly was neither a liberal nor a reformer. The Slavophiles criticized Peter as the destroyer of old Russian mysticism and as the man who, for the sake of introducing foreign technique and economics, killed many thousands of people, including his own son. The first generation of Soviet historians, the school of Pokrovsky, tried to criticize Peter from a more progressive point of view, they blamed him for his failure in his essential aim of

capitalist industrialization and for the sufferings of the toiling masses in an experiment the fruits of which could only benefit their exploiters. Sometimes, it is true, the Pokrovskian historians themselves, in their polemics against the former official cult of Peter, relapsed into the Slavophil tendency of defending all his antagonists, including such obvious reactionaries as his son and grandson.

Present Soviet historians, for example in the official textbook by Shestakov, acknowledge that Peter *the Great*, as he is again called, 'did a good deal to shape and strengthen the state ruled by the big landlords and merchants. They sympathize with him in his struggle against ecclesiastical and similar reactionaries, and with the peasant risings of the time which were directed against the Petrine state. The achievement of reform within the existing system is recognized as well as the necessity of eventually overthrowing this system. This result seems to be reasonable from the historical as well as from the methodological point of view, and it may be regarded as characteristic of the attitude of Stalinist Russia towards the Russian past.

There can be no doubt that at certain moments certain aspects of Russian history are specially emphasized in popular propaganda. The growing danger of capitalist intervention has been answered by remembering 1812, growing Nazi threats by reminiscences of Lake Peipus, 1242 Moscow, 1612, provided an argument against Pilsudski's Poland (as did also the seventeenth-century struggles of the Ukrainian Cossacks against their Polish overlords), and Archangel'sk and the 26 Baku commissaries against the anti Soviet attitude which prevailed in the West during the Finnish War of 1939-40. But to emphasize, for needs of popular propaganda, certain topical aspects of national history is one thing, and to correct history for propagandist aims is another. I do not think that present Soviet writing of history deserves the latter reproach, at least in so far as it deals with issues outside the field of factional struggles within the Bolshevik party.

Unless a pragmatic philosophy is accepted, there can be no excuse for the adaptation of historical teaching to the needs of political propaganda, however widespread the practice may be in all countries. Marx has taught that it is in practical action that man must prove the reality of his thought but he has strictly rejected a pragmatist philosophy, and official Soviet philosophy follows his line energetically, claiming for Marxist teaching an objective standard of truth. So any painting in black and white, any selection and interpretation in accordance with what is regarded as the correct policy of the historical facts taught within the framework of public propaganda, must be regarded as inadequate by the standards established by Soviet philosophy. No detached critic of Soviet literature can deny that there are such inadequacies. Within the realm of scientific research there can be no excuse for them. But within the framework of a sociological analysis of the conditions under which Marxism finds its partial realization in the U.S.S.R., it is possible to understand their causes. Prior ideological systems which have con-



quered the world, were strictly separated from a scientific analysis of reality—although that was to a certain degree an indispensable condition of success. The leaders of the Christian Church who conquered the Roman Empire, apart from being men sincerely believing in their cause and ready to sacrifice their lives for its sake just as present-day Communists are, were certainly not bad politicians—in spite of Tertullian's explanation of his theological faith "*Credo, quia absurdum*". When dying at the stake they did not analyse the rational foundations of the cause for which they died. But before martyrdom the average bishop had had many years of organizing his diocese according to principles of common sense, that were strictly separated from the metaphysical belief it had to serve.

Marxism is organizing the U S S R according to rational principles embodied in the same system of thought that serves as the political creed, raising its adherents, and the whole nation, to enthusiasm and self sacrifice. From the point of view of making policies intelligible to the broad strata of those who are carrying them out, this has the great advantage that the system of thought spread by public propaganda as the ideological foundation of the state, also makes the citizen's active participation in shaping public policies possible. From the point of view of a strictly scientific, i.e. unbiased, approach to historical facts it is evident that the use of the state ideology as an explanation of the actual policies of the state as well as of its origins and historical development is bound to result in selection and interpretation of the historical facts in accordance with what is regarded as the correct policy. It is very difficult for human beings to avoid selecting facts deemed relevant by the criterion of conclusions they deem right. It is very difficult to reconcile the philosophical struggle against pragmatism with the deeply rooted custom of criticizing, and rejecting, sociological and historical theories according to the political consequences to which they are likely to lead. Certainly the position of the Christian who, in the case of conflict, could retreat into the assumption of a double truth, a metaphysical, spiritual, and a common, worldly one, was easier. But it is one of the fundamental claims of Marxism that it interprets the world in such a way that complete agreement between the ideas and the facts, governing the action of men, can be achieved. The future of Marxism, as a scientific theory, in the U S S R as well as in any country where it might conquer political power, implies the rejection of pragmatism, as the ideology of a decaying world that no longer dares to face the facts, and the exclusion of political expediency from arguments used in scientific discussion.

As to theoretical interpretation of facts, I do not think that recent developments of Soviet historiography are exposed to serious criticism from the Marxist point of view—at least in essentials it seems that the claims of the Soviet writers to have restored original Marxian conceptions is justified. The conception of 'merchant capitalism' contradicted the fundamental Marxist thesis that various stages of social develop-

nient are characterized by the various forms in which men *produce* their livelihood. In 1930-1 Prokrovsky himself had to acknowledge that the conception of merchant capitalism was nonsense 'for capitalism is a system of production, but merchant capital does not produce anything'. Once the Marxist characteristic of distinct social systems according to the prevailing forms of production is accepted, there can be no doubt that, prior to the twentieth century, the bulk of the Russian people worked under feudal, or semi feudal, conditions.

One of the most usual reproaches against Marxism is its alleged neglect of the historical importance of human thought. The present Soviet point of view on this issue can best be characterized by a quotation from a recent official document.<sup>126</sup> 'New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society'. But they arise 'precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is impossible to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organizing, mobilizing, and transforming action'.

No people and no organization bound to action can deny the power of the spiritual sources of their action and least of all would such a denial be in the spirit of the man who wrote a century ago 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways—the point, however, is to change it'.<sup>127</sup> You cannot do justice to the Russians of today without continually remembering that while interpreting the world they are fully occupied in changing it.

At one point, however, the very success of the application of Marxist principles to the reorganization of Russian society seems to have resulted in making certain canons of Marxist analysis obsolete. According to traditional Marxism—including especially the classical—the state, like law, morality, religion, etc., is a 'superstructure' upon the really determining factor of human history, the social relations entered into by men in producing the means of livelihood. To understand what the American, English, German, or pre-revolutionary Russian state can do and what it cannot do, one has, according to Marxist theory, to study the economic organization of the country, the organization of industry, the existing monopolist organizations, the power of the banks, the distribution of landed property, trade unions, and so on. The 'purely political sphere' furnishes, at the best, the traditional forms in which the representatives of these interests act. But in the U S S R the state itself is by far the greatest economic organization. It would be pure nonsense to regard it as a superstructure upon what private enterprise remained during the NEP, more particularly among the kulaks, or, at present, as a mere regulating organ between the kollektives and state-owned industries. Such opinions have been duly rejected as a 'right wing deviation' when advocated by the opponents of the collectivization of agriculture. The Marxist definition may fit a state 'above' a 'bourgeois

<sup>126</sup>*History of the C.P.S.U.* (English edition), pp. 116-7.

<sup>127</sup>Marx, *Theses on Feuerbachian Philosophy* (1845).

society' in the Hegelian-Marxist sense, i.e. an essentially political organization as distinct from the plurality in the rule, of non state economic entities under the law of the state but actually ruled by the laws of political economy. But, evidently, the Marxist definition does not fit a state that itself is the main organization of economic life. The actions of such a state are still limited by the given productive forces, the level of technique, and so on, as well as by the international environment. It may still be possible to understand the laws, ideologies, etc., of such a state by studying its economic needs, and Lenin's description of politics as a 'concentrated expression of economics' is amply quoted in our time. But the actions of the state *qua* state can no longer be interpreted as a mere superstructure upon an autonomous system of economic relations, and the assertion that public policies were a mere mechanical expression of economic facts is strictly rejected by Soviet theorists since the days when it formed a main ideological weapon of the Bukharinist school in their struggle against what was called 'over investment'.

After that struggle, for many years it was usual to deprecate the importance of economic laws for Soviet society—that is to say, to assert that its development was governed merely by the policies of the state. The current, though certainly non-Marxist,<sup>138</sup> identification of the concept of 'surplus value' with capitalist exploitation, contributed towards making the recognition of the validity of basic laws of economics in Soviet society suspect. Such recognition, if carried through in the terms of the Marxist state ideology, involves the recognition of the existence of surplus value created by the Soviet worker during all that part of the working day when he works for public investments, welfare institutions and armaments. Only very recently<sup>139</sup> the need to make the people

<sup>138</sup>Cf. the sharp polemic in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* against Lassalle's concept of 'the worker's right to the undiminished proceeds of his toil'. The basic Marxist argument in favour of Socialism is based not upon the fact that in capitalist society the worker creates more value than he receives as remuneration for his work (though its misunderstanding in that sense is common in popular writings, and repeated even in G. D. H. Cole's *Introduction to Eden* and Cedar Paul's translation of *Capital*). It is based upon the fact that the disposition of the surplus product is in the hands of a class of private owners of means of production who are bound to use it in a way conducive to waste of productive resources, periodical mass-unemployment and wars.

<sup>139</sup>This is the only part of recent Soviet ideological developments where the original sources are accessible to the English reader, for the article 'On the Teaching of Economics' (by Leontiev and others) has been reproduced in *The American Review of Economics* 1944 No. 3 (where it was followed by an interesting discussion in that and the following 1945 volume), and an article by Ostratjanov has been reproduced in *Science and Society*, Summer 1945. It is hardly necessary to state that this extraordinary interest in theoretical developments in the U.S.S.R. was caused by a very common phenomenon—namely the discovery by some journalist that 'fundamentals of Marxism have been dropped' once more in the U.S.S.R. This assertion—which seems rather to contradict the facts explained above—was made partly in the rather friendly sense that the Soviet ideology had ceased to be hostile to capitalist society as existing in the U.S.A., and partly as a Trotskyite reproach that the U.S.S.R. now recognizes that it is a capitalist country, *quod erat demonstrandum*. Actually no more has been recognized than what every child inside and outside the U.S.S.R. knew before, namely (a) that there are, in the U.S.S.R., prices, expressed in money, money wages and money accounts (b) that there is inequality of income, according not only to the quantity but also to the quality of the work done, (c) that part—and, in consequence of the international

understand the limitations put upon public economic policies by the available resources and by the international situation, as well as the need for increased productive exertions, has resulted in straightforward recognition of the validity of basic economic laws, especially also of the determination of economic relations by the productivity of social labour.<sup>140</sup> This recognition has partly been based upon the existence of not fully Socialist elements in Soviet economics (such as the free market for the surplus product of the kollektors peasants, complete regulation of the prices of which is beyond the present economic resources of the state), but partly it is based upon such fundamental features of Soviet life as unequal payment for labour of different grades, and used in order to explain those features. The Marxist theory of value is not the strongest link in the whole Marxist system, and the difficulties implied in deriving from it the concrete economic events, say, in a society dominated by capitalist monopolies are not reduced once this theory is transferred to a society completely different from that from the conditions out of which it was abstracted. But, probably, attempts at applying the traditional Soviet theory to the present economic system are the preliminary condition of original contributions to its theoretical analysis.

Emphasis on, rather than criticism of, the specific features of Marxism, lies also at the root of a recent development which may result in very thorough changes in Marxist terminology. The need for analysing the less obvious background of Hitlerism has caused the Prussian State philosopher Hegel to be approached more critically than was hitherto usual amongst Marxists in view of the fact that Marx, indirectly his pupil, whilst criticizing him, developed his own theories within the framework of German classical philosophy and with the help of Hegelian terminology.<sup>141</sup> At the same time, Russian national pride had emphasized a fact already recognized by Marx and Engels themselves,<sup>142</sup>

situations a rather high part—of the national income is spent not on wages for the citizens, but on investments and armaments. It is a question of terminology whether one likes to describe such a state as Socialist, but people who refrain from doing so by choosing a suitable definition of Socialism can hardly avoid the reproach of confusing Socialism with Utopia, and applying to reality a completely irrelevant standard. In regard to the appreciation of capitalism, it is not necessarily bound to become more positive by the recognition that some—though not all, and not even the most important—of its traits are bound to continue during the following stage of social development, though some popular forms of Socialist propaganda may appear refuted by such statements.

<sup>140</sup>Which seems to me the only formulation in which the Marxist theory of value gives sense.

<sup>141</sup>The occasion for that criticism of Hegel has been offered by the publication of Volume III of the *History of Philosophy*, by Alexandrov, Muta and other members of the Academy of Science. The rather uncritical approach to Hegel in that volume was merely a continuation of the established Marxist habit. The Committee of Scientists who awarded the Stalin Prize to the authors of this volume could not have been aware of the new critical approach to Hegel, but the leaders of the Party apparently intervened and the Prize was withdrawn. There were explanations of this action in *Bolshevik*, 1944, Nos. 7-8-9.

<sup>142</sup>Collected Works of Marx and Engels. Russian edition, Vol. XXVII, p. 389. See Engels' letter to Pappe.

namely the superiority of the Russian progressive critics and philosophers like Belynsky, Herzen and Chernichevsky, over their German counterparts—the Young Hegelians and Feuerbach—from whose work they started. Consequently, these trends are bound to reduce the importance of the Hegelian philosophies as a source of Marxism. It will become one of the many *bourgeois* attempts of the early nineteenth century to establish laws of historical development and to understand the class structure of modern society. It may be thought as no more important than the works of the French historians of the restoration or the Ricardian school of radical British economists. Thus the modern Russian Marxists may replace the Young Hegelians and Feuerbach, those predecessors of Marx, by such dialectic philosophers as Chernichevsky. Possibly this realignment may make Marxism more acceptable in the Western countries.

Besides the national pride of the Russians, there are serious arguments in favour of such an approach. The strong efforts hitherto made by nearly all Marxists—Lenin not excluded—to find 'the rational grain in Hegel's philosophies' met great difficulties in separating the progressive elements of an intellectual reflection of the French Revolution from the actual political and theological views of the philosophers, that is to say, from those compromises with feudal society upon which the Prussian state was based. Marx had two main arguments in favour of such efforts: the tendency of Victorian *bourgeois*—not only in Germany—to ascribe eternity to the *bourgeois* order, in the philosophical terms of a metaphysical mechanistic materialism, and the need, for a Marxist mass party in Germany, to establish the links between its ideology and the great intellectual traditions of its country. Both arguments have gone. To flirt with Hegel's terminology, in opposition to materialist *bourgeois*—as Marx called it in his later years in the preface to *Capital*—is today no more necessary than in the days when the young Marx, also in rather impolite terms, broke with Hegelian idealism. And if there should again be a powerful working class party in Germany, it will have to oppose the whole trend of German ideology that connected the right wing of the intellectual revival with the Hitlerite shame. To have a Russian ideology—with a strong Western background—would, in such circumstances, be preferable to being connected with Prussian state-philosophies.

At the present stage, it is hardly possible to foretell all the possible implications of that development. Should Hegel, *qua* forerunner of Marxist Dialectics, be definitely put on a level with other pre-Marxist thinkers, the fact that Marx borrowed his terminology could be reduced to a historical chance. That terminology—indeed, a handicap in the popularization of Marxism—could be dropped, and Stalin has already prepared the way in the explanation of Dialectic and Historical Materialism.<sup>143</sup> If, further, Russian democratic philosophers are accep-

<sup>143</sup>In the *History of the CPSU*, included also in the recent editions of Stalin's *Leninism*.

ted as the best representatives of pre-Marxist thought, Leninism would get a specific national background, with Marx-Engels as the only recognized decisive foreign influence on the line of development of Russian thought, whilst Hegel, Feuerbach and the rest would be recognized as mere stimulants of a development conditioned by the needs of the preparatory stages of the Russian Revolution. Such an interpretation would probably be more Marxist than the traditional one—with Marxism as an international ideology simply received in Russia, strangely enough the only country where it was further developed. It would further emphasize the specific characteristics of Marxism as distinct from what Marx had learned from Hegel, but could have learnt as well from Guizot, Thierry and Ricardo, if not from Harrington. Whilst putting the Soviet State ideology in a broader international framework than has been usual hitherto, in view of the personal circumstances of the founders of Marxism,<sup>141</sup> it would stronger emphasize its *differentia specifica* as opposed to all its predecessors, especially the concept of proletarian dictatorship as the foundation of the ruling party of the U S S R.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup>Which would not prevent an analysis of the historical reasons why Marxism developed under just these circumstances, that is to say, in pre 1848 Germany.

<sup>142</sup>As already to be seen in the mentioned article by Fedossejev, in *Bolshevik* 1944 No. 3.

## *Nationalism and Soviet Patriotism in Art and Literature*

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THE WRITER IS NOT specially qualified to discuss the merits of the artistic development of the U S S R. In this book, we are concerned not with the arts as such, but rather with the trends in national life which found expression in the arts. The writer is quite conscious that this treatment involves a neglect of the essential elements of art. But having drawn attention to this limitation of the field of study, we can pass on to a discussion of the sociological aspects of Soviet art.

Two phases of the question ought to be clearly distinguished: the problems of a period of struggle for Socialism and those of a Socialist system. The most remarkable changes in the attitude of the Soviet towards art are due to the transition from a period dominated by the first group of problems to the second, when the problems of art in a Socialist society began to evolve (they have, hitherto, hardly done more than *begin* to evolve).

The problems facing the Russian Communists in the period of transition were in a sense not very different from those facing Communist parties in other countries—say Germany, France or China—where a strong Communist movement possessed a certain amount of influence amongst progressive intellectuals and advanced artists. For, in spite of the fact that the U S S R during the NEP period was ruled by the Communist Party, the influence of the Communists did not dominate the Russian intelligentsia, including artists. Unless a sectarian point of view were to be taken and the political power of the Soviet state used to suppress the work of the non-Communist majority of the artists, the only possible policy for the Communists in this field was to influence artists indirectly. They encouraged tendencies sympathetic to Communism; they helped sympathetic artists to organize and to agitate among the non-Communist majority of the artists as well as the public. They gave as much publicity as possible to works of art deemed useful from the revolutionary point of view. The content and character of these works did not so strongly differ from what every Western critic could observe among the artistic productions of left-wingers in his own or neighbouring countries.

During the whole of this period, though some groups of artists described themselves as especially revolutionary and, therefore, especially deserving the support of the Soviet state, the Communist Party consistently declined to accept any claim of this kind. It left to the artists, and to the mutual criticism of their contending sects, the determination of the kind of artistic form most suitable to deal with the

issues of the time. The idea of an essential connection between the proletarian revolution and some ultra modern trends in art was never taken seriously among Russian Marxists. As distinct from many Western left wing intellectuals they did not feel particularly attracted by ultra modernism. Lenin himself, an admirer of classical art like most orthodox Marxists, held the somewhat primitive but not unreasonable view that 'proletarian art' is the kind of art a proletarian can appreciate—given a practicable system of adult education. Artists of all schools found the state controlled publishing enterprises ready to publish their works, provided they showed a sufficient amount of sympathy for the basic institutions of the régime. They were thus given the chance to make good their claim that their ideas as to aesthetic form were especially suitable to the proletarian revolution. However, none of the advanced schools appealed to any large section of the public. Artists who tackled problems far removed from the propaganda needs of the state were not interfered with and during the period of the NEP there was a sufficient market for works of an avowedly non Communist character to give such artists their chance. As the Communists were a minority among the artists as well as among the intelligentsia in general which was the main public for the work of advanced artists, the problem and danger of conformity did not even arise. The state would have been the last to further any monopolist claims of any school. This attitude of neutrality could be maintained the more easily as most of the works of the advanced artists were far removed from the understanding of that mass public in the education of which the state was interested.

The whole position changed as a result of two sets of changes in the social situation. As the economic system developed more and more into state Socialism, the state became the sole middleman between the artist and his public. With the end of the NEP, private enterprise in publishing was no more tolerated than private enterprise in any other industry or trade. On the other hand, a large potential public for the works of the artist developed in consequence of the gradual increase in the standard of living and the spread of literacy.

Architecture was one of the first arts to be affected by these changes. During the first decade of the Revolution there had been hardly more than an occasional opportunity to build. Consequently it was not a matter of great public concern if this or that school of artists put before the public what it considered to be models of things to come. After the First Five-Year Plan, the whole outlook changed. Many billions of roubles were spent on buildings, not merely because of the immediate urgency of the need but also to demonstrate to the people who had to bear the burden of reduced consumption that their sacrifice was worth while. The average Moscow citizen could not see, indeed must not see, the secret tank factories built somewhere in Siberia. The country was not rich enough to build blocks of flats for more than a small minority of shock workers and technicians. But the average Moscow citizen could be shown for what ultimate arms production was enormously increased



while his wage remained nearly stable. The Moscow Metro was a first-class opportunity to show him in a way that was impressive to him. Everything must be done to take advantage of such an opportunity. The decision on the appropriate style was, evidently, something to be decided, after due discussion among the specialists, by the leading political authorities.

Only somewhat less marked was the change in fields where Soviet arts had already flourished during the preceding period, such as literature, the theatre, and film production. The market for the products of these arts was enormously widened to include millions of people formerly illiterate or semi-literate. There was no longer an overwhelming need to offer them free artistic entertainment for educational purposes. We have seen above<sup>146</sup> that the state used the artistic as well as other needs of the people as an incentive for increased production. While consciously aiming at satisfying the cultural needs of the consumer on as high a level as possible, the state had in the first place to cater for those mass tastes which it was trying to develop.

Here there is an evident analogy between the recent development in the U.S.S.R. and in other countries. Elsewhere, as in the U.S.S.R., the appeal to the mass taste has to a certain extent supplanted the appeal to a small and critical public. In the U.S.S.R. the state has certainly the will and the power to develop mass taste in a certain direction towards a higher cultural level. But if it should move too far ahead of the level of the average consumer in its cultural activities, it would deprive these activities—an important part of its propaganda—of their effectiveness.<sup>147</sup>

If the state was to cater for mass needs, experiments were out of the question as far as this central task was concerned. The only possible basis of public policy was the tradition that had proved a long-standing success, if not with the masses—who, then, had been illiterate—then with those people who were able to transfer education to the masses, i.e. with the intelligentsia, old and new. This tradition was that accepted as classical—in literature from Pushkin to Gorki. The decision in favour of this tradition was furthered by two facts. Nearly all its representatives had been progressives<sup>148</sup> in the political field, and the predominant tradition of Russian art had been distinctly realistic. Though prior to Gorki, the Russian classics had not been definitely Socialist, this did not necessarily reduce their usefulness as a bridge for the peasant masses,

<sup>146</sup>See pp. 49-50.

<sup>147</sup>See note 38 p. 49.

<sup>148</sup>With the exception of Dostoevsky who in fact is the only Russian classic only moderately popularized by present Soviet cultural policy. The cause of such an attitude is not Dostoevsky's religious approach (Tolstoy who has been popularized by the Soviet from the very beginning was certainly a religious man too) but his mysticism, his emphasis on introspection as opposed to action for bettering the world. The many foreigners who regarded Dostoevsky and the trend in Russian thought he stood for, as the true Russian spirit were certainly bound to be disappointed by the Russian revolution, including its present stage. On the other side it is not difficult to understand that the Soviet had little interest to encourage a spiritual communion with India, for holiness and helplessness.

illiterate a mere decade before, to the Socialist art to come. Certainly it was a useful bridge for the remnants of the old intelligentsia with whom the Soviet desired to collaborate. In any case the classics formed a basis from which an all national development could start, the experiments of the first revolutionary period did not. It was not a mere chance but a conscious political demonstration, that Stanislavsky's Moscow Arts Theatre, a typical expression of the pre revolutionary intelligentsia, was given special distinction on that very day in 1937 when Meyerhold's theatre, the main bulwark of post revolutionary advanced experiment, was closed. The supporters of such an experiment like the supporters of experiments in the other fields we have discussed—education, family life, or law—were bound to reject the new developments as counter-revolutionary. Probably it would be an injustice to the Soviet dictatorship in this as well as in other fields to regard its present form as anything more than an expedient applied at a time of supreme national danger to achieve a maximum of ideological conformity, and to obviate all potential threats to the desired national unity. But behind these symptoms lurks a more fundamental problem.

It is certainly not true that a Socialist state must necessarily be less able and willing to satisfy the individual tastes of the consumers than private enterprise. Being subjected—even in the present U S S R—to a certain degree of control from below, and needing the satisfaction of its consumers not only for making business but even for its survival, the state supplying various products is likely to consider the consumer's needs rather more than a private capitalist monopoly would do. The Soviet has developed, in its large department stores for example, methods of keeping in touch with the consumer's desires rather superior to those I know of elsewhere. There are, for example, periodical conferences of housewives, patrons of the Moscow 'Univermags', where the latest patterns of electric irons as well as of frocks or toys are discussed, with the managers of the stores and representatives of the factories which supply the goods in attendance. But there is a fundamental difference between meeting the needs of the customer in these and in purely artistic fields. Every housewife with some practice can judge the merits of an electric iron, and every mother thinks she can contribute valuably to a discussion on the educational merits of toys. As regards the frocks it is the customer who has to wear them—and if she and her friends are satisfied, the frock has been a success, indeed. Besides, by laying strong emphasis on national traditions and folklore, the state does its part to prevent her judgement on what fashions are becoming from being dominated simply by the latest imported Western film. But as regards purely artistic questions it is quite evident that the average customer for art (and this means, in a democratic conception, every citizen who passes through the Moscow Metro, or occasionally visits the theatre) will, in aesthetic taste, merely reflect those standards to which he has been educated. One cannot, at the same time, be a democrat and be afraid of the fact that the judgement of the average consumer of art

is bound to reflect the level to which social conditions have brought him. If there is a certain 'Victorian' flavour, to use the English expression, in some present Soviet productions it ought to be kept in mind that the Russian peasants, who were illiterate 20 years ago, have at least the same right as the Birmingham and Manchester industrialists and merchants of a century ago to celebrate their access to wealth and political power in a somewhat primitive way. The grandsons of those industrialists, to day incline to rather over-sophisticated trends in art. Even if one is inclined to attribute this fact to their separation from the broad masses of the people (left to the cinema and 'thrillers') one may hope that the sons and daughters of the present Soviet generation will make big steps forward beyond the present level. But how can they be moved forward? Can a state whose every investment must deprive the tables of its citizens allow wide freedom of experiment, at the public expense even if distasteful to the majority of these citizens? Or should this majority, by determining the style in which actual buildings are to be built, determine also the surroundings that will form the judgement of the next generation? The dilemma seems insoluble, like so many Soviet dilemmas, unless the country can experience a long period of peace and material progress. If there were a period when large expense even on some apparently unsuccessful experiment can be justified for the experiment's sake, when artistic heresy is not suspect as being a veiled form of opposition to the supreme demand of national unity in an hour of crisis, the most of the problems of 'directed arts' would disappear.

The forms of the present Soviet arts may be transitional, the methods by which the desired changes were carried through ephemeral (or so at least I hope). But the general trend of these changes corresponds to essential trends in Soviet society, caused by the broadening of the social and political basis of the dictatorship. Revival of the classics is one side of this development, stronger emphasis on folklore another. The classical writers or at least their progressive majority had concentrated their interest upon the peasant masses of the people. One need hardly wonder that the Soviet took an interest in these writers, once the collectivized peasantry had entered the foreground of Soviet politics. On the other hand, there was a considerable amount of popular art of the peasant people themselves, in the applied arts, the Russian home crafts, in literature and music the old—partly mediaeval, even partly heathen—*bylines* (national epos) and many national songs and dances. Among the Great Russians with their highly developed professional art, folklore formed only part of the national culture. But with many non-Russian nationalities of the Tsarist Empire, folklore, and in some cases recently disinterred ancient literary works, formed the only basis from which the new development of the national cultures could start.

The tendency we have just described is not peculiar to Soviet development alone. Slavonic peoples such as the Czechs or the Southern Slavs cultivate similar tendencies. True, folklore in these countries, as indeed in all countries, is threatened by the rivalry of

professional art—in this case professional Western art—which by attracting the educated classes and thence the lower classes tends to restrict folklore to a mere hobby. But there is a very marked distinction between the cultivation of national tradition in Soviet Russia and elsewhere. The latter is always exclusive and frequently approaches chauvinism, the worst excesses of which were reached in the Hitlerite cult of *'Blut und Boden'*. The national cultural heritage is emphasized to prove the superiority of the particular nation above all other nations. In Russia just the opposite takes place. Grusinian, Armenian, or Uzbek national art is celebrated in special 'National Decades' in the heart of the Union certainly not in order to prove the superiority of one above the other federated peoples, including the Great Russians. Neither is it celebrated merely to tickle the fancy and to prove the width and strength of the multi-national Empire, as Indian culture might be celebrated even by the most die-hard Briton. Emphasizing any individual Soviet people's national heritage means emphasizing the contribution it is able to make as an equal partner to the multi-national, not a national, culture of the community. Soviet policy in the arts, as well as Soviet policy in general, seems to be at its best when dealing with the national problem even under the difficult conditions arising out of a federation between formerly ruling and formerly colonial peoples.

The appeal to the classics and to folklore forms the starting point of present Soviet policy in the arts. The reproduction of the treasures of the past ought to form a bridge to the future, for the remnants of the old intelligentsia as transmitters, as well as for the masses of the peasants, and most of the workers who have only recently come from the village, who form the main public for Soviet cultural activities. But the bridge has two ends and a suitable starting point is only the preliminary condition for developing an original new culture. During the revolutionary period Soviet sympathizers were only a minority, although a favoured minority, among the artists. Now the system relies on the support of the whole intelligentsia, the old as well as the new, and it is virtually in complete control of the 'market' for all works of art. Therefore it must take up a line about art, it must develop its 'line' of policy as in other fields. This 'line' has been indicated by the slogan 'Socialist realism', but this slogan means little, and is open to misunderstanding abroad, unless it is understood in connection with the polemics out of which it arose. It took its rise as polemic against the ultra-modernist, 'formalist' trends which had been popularized during the first revolutionary period, as well as against the tendency, based upon the traditions of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, of regarding Naturalism as the only truly progressive art, and any deviation from it, especially any kind of symbolism, as a reflection of the state of mind of a decaying society that did no more dare to face the truth. As the slogan of 'Socialist realism' must take account of the very diverse trends in Soviet cultural life, it has to be somewhat comprehen-

sive, and by emphasizing the one or the other side of the official delimitation, the artist schools may—and probably will—continue their contest. The theoretical description sometimes shows more polemical emphasis than distinct content. But, in fact, it is a recapitulation of the principles which the best examples of Soviet art followed from the very beginning.

Take, for example, the first Soviet film that made for the world wide renown of Soviet film production, *Battle cruiser Potemkin* (1925) and compare it with a more recent picture *The Fatherland Calls* (1935). Probably most readers will remember the wonderful closing part of *Potemkin* where the revolutionary ship is breaking through the line of the Tsarist fleet, which is itself nearly mutinous. One sees mere engines working. But the mechanisms of the turrets proclaim something. Behind these engines are living men and however many 'Potemkins' may be defeated in future, Freedom and Peace, at last, will conquer.

Now take the closing scene of *The Fatherland Calls*. The Nazi bomber, the villain of the piece, has been shot down in aerial combat and lies, burning, on the wide Russian plain. And while it is burning something happens to the varnish on the surface of the wing: it melts, and the Swastika painted on it drips away. There is no expression of wishful thinking: the German soldiers one sees in the picture behave like normal Nazi soldiers. Even among the German prisoners of war one sees in the picture, there is no sensationalism. What one sees is a symbol: drop by drop the Swastika melts away from the surface of a burning German bomber. There is no visionary revolutionism, but there is a strong, and unbreakable, belief that Fascism will break down, and Socialism conquer. It is expressed by very similar methods as in the *Potemkin* of 1925.

Realism, as understood by present Soviet theory of Art, does not exclude painting things in black and white. Even if especially delicate subjects such as inter-factional struggle within the Bolshevik party (as described in the film *Lenin*) are left out, it must not be supposed that what is described in quite realistic terms hopes to give an all-round picture of reality. Soviet realism does not merely describe. It frequently describes to denounce. But certainly its descriptions recently have become much more complete in some highly important respects.

The subject and the main aim of the propaganda is the new conception of the Soviet fatherland as the community of all its honest citizens. This propaganda is aimed not against a certain sector of these citizens—wherever they stood during the past great crises—but against whatever threatens the Soviet fatherland from within or from without. The main appeal is made to feelings and memories that unite the present with the past and, most of all, unite all the nations which together form the Soviet federation.

Originally the main subject of Soviet art was the class struggle in its highest forms, revolution and civil war, or at least preparation for revolution. The truthfulness and sympathy with which such things

could be described largely accounts for the achievements of the first period of Soviet art. Very few of the people who participated in producing the *Battle-cruiser Potemkin* had personal reminiscences of the episode, or even of the 1905 revolution. But all of them, and indeed the whole of their Soviet public knew, by personal experience, what a revolution was like. Therefore they were able to describe it with a truthfulness that moved the advanced public abroad which knows revolutions only from history books, if at all. But though the film *Potemkin* describes truthfully the feelings, the ideals and the world of revolutionaries, it does not give a very complete or satisfactory description of the world of their oppressors. Sholokhov's novel *And Quiet Flows the Don* marked a distinct step forward. A serious attempt was made to understand and to describe objectively, and not without sympathy, the feelings of those who, in the days of the Civil War, took the side that proved wrong. Of course it was no mere chance, at least as regards the success of the novel, that it dealt with the Cossacks, i.e. with a section of the Russian people that had been so strongly divided during the Civil War. Winning the active support of the Cossacks for the defence of the Soviet fatherland presupposed an act of reconciliation, achieved in fact in 1935 by the restoration of the traditional Cossack formations which involved the restoration of the civic rights of those who had participated in the Civil War on the side of the Whites. *And Quiet Flows the Don* was successful too in the sense that it introduced this act of reconciliation. Other sections of society which formerly stood aside were to be reconciled too. Soon came novels dealing with Russia's great past.

*Peter the Great* by Alexey Tolstoy is, in my opinion, one of the best historical novels ever written—and it could only have been written in Stalinist Russia. Official or liberal pre-revolutionary writers (including, of course, the emigres) had idealized Tsar Peter, and the writers of the first Soviet period had written in a spirit of purely negative criticism. It speaks for the moral forces of at least part of Soviet literature—and against current prejudices as regards the freedom granted to it—that Tolstoy as well as Sholokhov wrote rather in opposition to the then predominating trends, and that both got their books successfully published.

After having mentioned the main trends in Soviet artistic development, little additional information can be gained by discussing the theories as evolved since the Congress of the Soviet authors in 1935. 'Socialist realism' as it is now defined differs from mere 'naturalism'. It does not aim at a photographic record. It selects what it considers to be relevant. Present Soviet criticism acknowledges that the classical works of 'naturalism' have been 'realistic' in this sense. Of course, Zola did not write *Germinal* merely to give a 'photographic' description of capitalist exploitation and the workers' reaction to this exploitation. He wanted to further Socialism. Being a great artist, he succeeded in doing this much more effectively by a description of what every reader had to accept as at least possible facts, than other people had done by long

declamations. In this sense all good Soviet art from the very beginning was 'realist' and the new formula was rather a description of what already existed.

'Socialist realism' is opposed to idealism and symbolism of all kinds. It would be quite impossible to represent in Soviet art for other than satirical aims (and now even this would be avoided in order not to violate the feelings of believers) any mystical idea. But the two classical Soviet films just mentioned show that some kind of symbolism finds its place even within orthodox materialism. 'Socialist realism' gives, avowedly, some place to romanticism—otherwise it would hardly be possible to assimilate such an essential part of the national heritage as Pushkin. The feudal past is not glorified by the whole of nineteenth century Russian romanticism. There was also a school of romanticism, in Russia as in other countries,<sup>149</sup> which attacked and satirized the past in so far as it opposed present progress. In so far as the feudal past is merely regarded as a certain phase in the national development it is, today, accepted by official Soviet ideology as part of the national heritage. On 22 June, 1941, in the afternoon of the day on which the Nazi hordes attacked Socialist Russia, I heard Moscow broadcasting that scene of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Prince Igor* where, in his absence, the barbarian hordes attack the hero's castle. The Russian warriors under the leadership of their prince's wife defend it successfully, although the castle burns. Russia does not cease to be Russia for being Socialist.

I mentioned at the beginning of the present chapter that I intended to deal with Soviet art merely from the point of view of the sociologist and that this is not the only, and not the essential point of view in art. But even the sociologist may attempt to answer the question of how the political and social position of the arts in a Socialist state may influence their future progress.

To have brought the Russian classics to the people, the source of all future Russian art, and to have delivered the treasures of folklore from the Cinderella role formerly forced on them by all kinds of academic art—old-fashioned or ultra modern—marks an enormous step forward. The whole importance of this step will probably not be experienced until the next generation grows up. Admittedly, the methods by which this progress was achieved, under the aegis of a state which controlled the market, were bound to create some undesirable by-products. Once official sympathy for classicism had been expressed, a somewhat cautious architect might tend to stick some columns or similar ornaments on his otherwise sober building, and the result might look very strange indeed. But these are the excesses, not the essentials. As regards the essentials, state intervention with that which cannot develop but by a maximum amount of free initiative, and freedom even of error, is

<sup>149</sup>In Germany, for example, the young Schiller, Fichte, and especially Heine. Being a romantic, i.e. using symbolic expressions for what he had to say, did not prevent Heine—or Pushkin—from strongly rejecting the fashionable reactionary romanticism as expressed, for example, by the 'Historical School', or Neo-Catholicism in Germany.

certainly full of dangers, especially if this state is virtually the monopolist controller of the market. But, as I said before, it would probably be wrong to regard the existence of a 'party line' in art as more than a temporary phenomenon, born partly out of the transitional needs of education in a formerly illiterate country, and partly out of an exceptionally difficult international situation that, in general, restricted the freedom of dissent the Soviet state felt able to tolerate. If a state spends many millions on the artistic appearance of a building like the Moscow Metro it will always be inclined to have an opinion regarding the educational value of such an investment. The fact that the state has an opinion in such matters merely accompanies the fact that it is able and ready to spend millions for purely educational purposes.

True, the positive problem starts just where the rather selective and distributive possibilities of state interference end. Raphael's *Suitor Madonna* appealed to all strata of the society for which the artists worked to the illiterate peasant who would pray his *St. Marys* with deeper emotion, as well as to the intelligentsia who could discuss refined problems of artistic expression, and even of philosophy. This was possible because the great artists of the Renaissance worked for an integrated society, though the strong appeal of their work, as distinct from early mediaeval art, to us may be connected with the fact that it expressed the disintegration of mediaeval society, and the rise of the bourgeois individuality. At present, after industrial capitalism has done its work and disintegrated society, we find productive artists divorced from the understanding of the masses of the people—even if, like Picasso, they proclaim their adherence to Communism. They work for a small stratum of *connoisseurs* which is bound to be destroyed by a Socialist transformation, even one much less radical than that realized in the U S S R. Even assuming that a Socialist state could be expected to let its artist's education start where the private Maecenas had to stop exercising his function, it is inconceivable—and, from the Socialist point of view, not even desirable—that the stratum of *connoisseurs* produced by the class-structure of capitalist society should be replaced by another originating from educational or psychological experiments. The outcome of such a policy would simply be the prescription of the last expressionist fashion produced by the past order of society as the standard of coming academic art instead of the last style accepted by the masses of the nation as classical, as in Soviet art policies. In any case, the new society has to start its own artistic culture by producing a new group of people seeking artistic forms of expression and appealing, again, to an integrated society. Temporary recession of the element of formal expression—that is to say, of what many people would describe as the specific artistic element—is almost inevitable in such circumstances. The appeal of ancient Christian art rested at first upon a content accepted by all the members of the community. The current Soviet argument that great common experiences are bound to produce great artistic expressions is not convincing, art being only one of the



various possible expressions of social experience. Experience shows that some aspects of art flourish mainly at the eve of great revolutions, when social tensions seek expression, whilst others are favoured by the removal of existing restrictions and by the opening of new prospects to large strata of the people formerly excluded from all higher achievements of civilization. From the sociologist's point of view it is nonsensical to judge a social transformation by its ability to develop creative progress in all fields of art. There is no historical precedence for a transformation of the scale of the transition of a country with the record of Tsarist Russia to Socialism, and generalizations based on the outcome of *bourgeois-democratic* revolutions in Western countries would be evidently unjustified. The only thing that can be stated with some safety is the likelihood that maximum achievements in making the masses of the people familiar with the best achievements of existing art are also likely to create optimum conditions for eventual new creative trends.

## The General Outlook: Soviet Philosophy

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### (a) *The Attitude towards Church and Religion*

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to understand the development of Soviet philosophy without understanding its antagonists and it is impossible to understand these antagonists as merely abstract spiritual, instead of concrete social and political forces. To understand present Soviet philosophy we have to start from its struggle against traditional religion. But to understand this struggle we must analyse the historic position of the Russian Church. We cannot start from abstract philosophical principles as do some critics in this country.

Stalin has dropped other, more essential elements of classical Marxist theory than Marx's phrase that 'Religion is the dope of the people', to which Marx added the rider that this dope was necessary and unavoidable as long as the masses lived under conditions where they needed dope, and a strong polemic against liberal rationalism and its hopes for 'abolishing religion'. If Stalin has made no fundamental concessions to organized religion, the reason is not dogmatic inflexibility.

The essential reason is simple: the orthodox Church and to a lesser extent the most important churches of the non-Slavonic nations, especially Islam, were the chief stronghold of reaction in Russia until very recent times. Once the regime was firmly established, Bolshevism could make its peace with the traditions of Russian Liberalism which had striven, however timidly, for the liberation of the serfs. But it is difficult to forget that the Churches—the largest serf holders in Russia after the Tsar—opposed the abolition of serfdom in 1861, difficult not to remember that priests of the orthodox Church headed the anti Jewish pogroms after 1905, those pogroms that were Tsarism's answer to the dangerous revolutionary movement that shook the foundations of absolutism. Finally when the 1917 revolution took the anti-clerical course it was bound to take in the circumstances, the Church threw all its power behind the White counter revolution and thereby signed the death warrant of its own political influence.

The Church had its martyrs as had absolutism in England and France and there is room for human sympathy with the defeated cause. However, the essential fact is that the Church had no claim to be spared as a factor in Russian political life once the regime which it had upheld with all its power to the last had been overthrown. Nor would it be entirely true to say that, prior to the war, the Church no longer presented any threat to the Revolution. We have seen above<sup>150</sup> how, during the 1937

<sup>150</sup>See p. 88

elections, some leaders of the Church tried to act as a political party. The bishops, if no one else, must have realized that in the nature of the case an ecclesiastical political party was bound to be anti-Soviet.

The position of the smaller sects and of the religious organizations of the formerly oppressed nationalities was somewhat different. During the Civil War all these smaller sects and even Roman Catholics found for a time that there was a distinct improvement of their position as compared with Tsarist days, when they had been oppressed in favour of Orthodoxy. But it was not for long. The Soviet was to have the same experience as the French revolutionaries 130 years before, who had also encouraged sects opposing the former state Church, and even a split within the latter. All went well as long as the Revolution fought its original antagonists—the Russian landlords and their foreign supporters. But when, after 1927, the Bolsheviks went further and attacked the new *bourgeoisie*, the product of the NEP, and the capitalists and landlords of the formerly oppressed nations especially in Central Asia, these social classes found staunch supporters in those religious organizations that had up to then been loyal. For collectivization of agriculture and industrialization threatened their traditional rule as well as that of landlords and capitalists.

Meanwhile the 'living Church', a secessionist body within the orthodox Church whose growth had been encouraged by the Soviet, lost all its influence. Some of its adherents became out and out Communists, others returned to the orthodox fold. And the Orthodox Church supported the kulaks in their fight against collectivization. This course of events can hardly come as a surprise to any student of revolutionary movements. It is difficult to blame the Church at that stage, for inevitably it represented the traditional outlook of the village. Even if the leaders of the churches had wished (as they did not) to support the Soviet policy, their exhortations would have been ineffective. For the members of the ecclesiastical communities within each village were identical with those who, for social or traditional reasons, opposed the new state of things.

It was therefore a mere recognition of the political logic of the situation when in 1929 the Church was forbidden by law to engage in any social activity apart from the organization of religious worship. Religious organizations were no longer allowed to maintain charities, welfare organizations or co-operatives. This last form of organization had been very popular among the Volga German Mennonites and also with the Orthodox Church for it made possible the continued existence of monasteries under another name. Nor were they allowed to engage in education, nor permitted to own property except the essentials of religious worship. The 1936 Constitution distinguished between 'freedom of worship', as granted to the adherents of all religious faiths, and 'freedom of anti religious propaganda' as granted to all rationalist-minded citizens and organizations. Only the latter have the right to proselytize for their point of view—the believers, while the religious life

of their existing communities is protected,<sup>151</sup> are not allowed to widen their sphere of influence by propaganda. Individual propaganda, of course, can hardly be prevented. Religious instruction, independently of the schools and as a private activity of the parish priest, is allowed in small groups in the homes of the interested parents, and the Church maintains its ecclesiastical academy for training new priests. In discussing this point one ought to keep in mind that in Eastern Europe and Asia religious denomination and nationality are, very often, merely two sides of the same thing. Thus, for example, in Eastern Galicia, Roman Catholicism is identified by everyone with the Polish and either of the two Greek denominations with the Ukrainian nationality.<sup>152</sup> To 'polonize' a family implied making it enter the Roman Catholic Church—and the Pilsudskian regime had not failed to make use of this machinery. Happily, the inverse procedure has been prevented by the exchange of populations: those Poles who prefer to stay in the Soviet Ukraine are likely to be rationalist minded workers, and thus protected against nationalist missionary activities. If the Soviet constitution should grant the right of propaganda to religious bodies, it would legalize the competition of the Churches not only with the state-supported youth organizations (which the Soviet state would have little reason to fear), but also against each other, which would be a threat to the peaceful co-habitation of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

To describe the position of the Churches in the U.S.S.R. as 'religious persecution' is unjustifiable, unless ecclesiastical claims regarding the 'natural rights and responsibilities' of the Church are taken for granted. The Church is a strictly private organization. But this organization had, before the war, 40,000 evidently flourishing parish groups, and an annual income of about half a billion roubles. Thirty per cent. of the population were estimated to be participating, to some extent, in ecclesiastical life. It does not look as if it were an oppressed organization if the Moscow bishopric alone could collect one and a half million roubles on the occasion of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Red Army in 1942. Nor does active membership of the Church present an insurmountable obstacle to a professional career: among the contributors to a recent official publication of the orthodox Church<sup>153</sup> there were three professors and some well known artists. The leaders of the religious hierarchy themselves recognize that occasional interference with the

<sup>151</sup>Excesses of anti-religious propaganda in the sense of its using no more arguments, but violating the feelings of the believers are also discouraged, and disturbing religious services constitutes an offence.

<sup>152</sup>Each of them, again, is merely conspicuous for a distinct political orientation: the Ukrainians for the Western, the Greek-Orthodox for the all-Slav.

<sup>153</sup>*The Truth on Religion in Russia*, published by the Moscow Patriarchate 1942, with a preface by Acting Patriarch Sergev (Russian). It is a highly interesting collection of articles, reports and documents regarding the position of the Church towards the war. See also *Soviet War News* 15 January 1943 with the New Year's messages of the Orthodox, Old Believers (the dissenting group, split up in the late seventeenth-century), Baptist and Protestant Churches. The present writer does not happen to know of similar documents from the Catholic side.

activities of this or that bishop is the consequence of his worldly, political activities. They appreciate that the recrudescence of interference in the political life of the country is due to habits contracted during the Tsarist period, when the Church was a privileged body, though by no means free from state control. On the other hand, they do not regard the loss of their former privileges as an unmitigated evil. There is no necessity to doubt the sincerity of such statements by men who have seen a Rasputin making and unmaking bishops, and have experienced what heavy price in popular sympathy the Church had to pay for its privileged economic position.

The Churches sincerely supported the Soviet regime in its struggle against Hitler's Germany, and also defend their Russian fatherland even against attempts of émigré bishops to mobilize American public opinion in favour of interference with the internal régime of the U S S R in the name of 'religious freedom'<sup>164</sup>. In doing so they follow the ancient tradition of the Russian Church which—apart from the post 1917 Civil War—always was to identify the cause of Russian national independence with the interests of the Church. Men like Alexander Nevsky, the conqueror of the Teuton order, or Dmitri Donsky, the liberator from the Tartar yoke, were canonized by the Church. As we have already seen, the Soviet regime now gives full weight to the historic importance of these struggles for national liberation. On the other hand the Church is now ready to regard men like Pushkin, Lermontov, Bjelinsky and Tolstoy as elements of the national tradition. There is not always a great difference between the language in which the beloved fatherland is described by official and by ecclesiastical publications. Certainly this is a proof of the complete success of Stalin's policy of establishing national unity under the banner of the revolutionary state. Is it also a proof that the historical reasons for the former antyclerical policy of the Soviet state no longer exist?

This policy was to a very large extent bound up with the need for security against potential fifth columnists. The Churches have proved themselves to be loyal supporters of the regime. Of course, this does not mean that they are necessarily supporters of all the policies of the regime. Even so, the proofs of the loyalty of the Church given during the war have already resulted in the Church having been granted all facilities for completing its internal organization, within the framework provided by the Disestablishment Laws. The permission, demanded by these laws, to hold a national congress of the Church has been granted, as it has not been since 1926. Thus Acting Patriarch Sergey could be elected Patriarch and, instead of the hitherto provisorium, a permanent national organization of the Church be established. Little has happened beyond a stabilization of the position hitherto, but the very fact of the state agreeing to such a stabilization implies a certain confidence that the restored national Church organization will not be misused for anti Soviet activities. However, it is essential to realize that

<sup>164</sup>Loc cit., pp. 12 ff.

there are still serious obstacles to be overcome before the present toleration of organized religion will give way to real neutrality of the state.

The first of these difficulties arises from the international affiliations of at least some of the Churches. The Roman Catholic Church was quite prepared to accept political pressure, to wit pressure by the Polish state upon its Ukrainian citizens, as a legitimate means to increase its flock. Thus it created such a situation that the Russian Orthodox Church was to describe<sup>155</sup> the occupation of the Western Ukraine by the Red Army as the restoration of the freedom of worship for orthodox Ukrainians. The pan Turanian campaign of Turkish or Afghan right wingers was tied up with pan Islamic propaganda, and supported by German as well as by Japanese publications and agents. Such facts were bound to cause suspicions against the Churches concerned. Where does legitimate sympathy with fellow believers abroad end, and treason in favour of foreign governments begin? The greatest difficulties, of course, arise with respect to the Roman Catholic Church. This Church has its own political programme embodied in the papal encyclicals, which every Catholic is bound to believe infallible. This programme is avowedly strictly opposed to the political programme of the Soviet Union, and the international policies of the Holy See are hardly distinguishable from those of any worldly propagandist of an anti-Soviet war. Here is therefore a strong case for retaining the provisions of Soviet legislation against religious propaganda as opposed to religious worship.

The second essential difficulty of the religious problem arises from the opposition of most of the Churches to the kind of popular education which the Soviet state regards as essential. Many an educated bishop or priest will pour contempt on the primitive duality of superstition and religion which used to prevail in Russia. He will feel that the need for religion is not lessened even if the Copernican system and the Darwinian theory be accepted. However, the enlightened conviction of some educated bishop is one thing, and the psychological basis of the influence of the Church on the mass of the population is another. In any case even the most educated bishop is bound to believe that the time available for the education of children is better applied in teaching them the Book of Genesis, with an interpretation by the village priest, rather than modern science. As the Soviet state is bound to hold the opposite view it must restrict the Church's influence on the education of children to a minimum. A mere twenty years ago the Communists could deeply impress the mass of the Church taught population by demonstrating that the bodies of the saints rot in just the same way as those of ordinary people. This is a very primitive sort of argument, but every serious observer of Russian life will agree that it is just about the level of the average Russian village priest. In any case it is not the Soviet state that has to bear the responsibility for the latter's level. Such facts must be borne in mind in connection with the attitude of the state not only towards the Church, but also towards modern science. The attitude of Communist

philosophers<sup>156</sup> is constantly influenced by the feeling that modern modifications of the Copernican system may tend to obscure some elementary truth and possibly weaken the authority of science as compared with religion in the village

These difficulties will disappear in due course. The Church accepts the new social order. It will attempt to reconcile its teachings with the discoveries of science. Having lost its mediaeval function as the protector of the traditional social order and as a substitute for education, it would still satisfy many spiritual needs. The intensity of the devotion of the smaller community may make up for the loss of the former outward conformity of the mass of the population. Even so, could the Church drop its claim to provide an order for society as a whole, an order comprehending the whole of the moral and intellectual life of society? Could it accept a position on a par with that of the arts and philosophy as a leisure time interest for a certain number of citizens? The Church, in any case, claims to represent an absolute truth, while the state, even in the most amicable interpretation of the disestablishment, can never dispute the Communist Party's claim to a similarly absolute truth for the essential foundations of Marxism. The war, in which Russian Christians and Russian Communists have fought side by side, has already resulted in greater toleration of religious activities. But the Russian state that has emerged victorious from the crisis is still the state of the 1917 revolution and of the Communist Party. Though there are many arguments in favour of greater liberalism, there are none in favour of abdication.

Now you need only look at any official Roman Catholic publication on the subject<sup>157</sup> to learn that 'religious freedom' as interpreted by the representatives of a totalitarian faith cannot possibly be conceded by any progressive state, however tolerant it may be. The Communist conception of religious freedom as freedom of worship is rejected<sup>158</sup> and opposed by the Catholic idea of religious freedom which includes, apart from public support for the priesthood, the right of Catholic children to be educated in Catholic schools and to be protected against anti-Catholic influences. 'Anti-Catholic influences', in the U.S.S.R., evidently include the influence of the state and the youth organizations sponsored by the state. These claims are incompatible with the policy of any purely secular state, for they are incompatible with a similar freedom for any alternative faith. As regards the U.S.S.R. in particular, Catholic publications like that just quoted are full of statements even about the purely secular side of its social order that seem calculated to confirm any Russian Communist in his conviction that this kind of propaganda is treason. And all these statements are based on authority any Roman Catholic is bound to regard as infallible!

Is this attitude peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church? Probably it

<sup>156</sup>Or adult educationists. See pp. 171 and 174.

<sup>157</sup>E.g. *R.I.G.M. in Russia* London Burns Oates 1940.

<sup>158</sup>Loc. cit., pp. 15-16.

is, at any rate in its extreme forms. The Russian Orthodox Church in the wartime publication we quoted above explicitly rejects intervention in politics, apart from defence of the common fatherland. But apart from fascist or semi-fascist propaganda of individual Churches<sup>139</sup> the difficulties remain enormous.

Any reasonable compromise would have to be based on a public recognition of the 'a religious, but not anti religious' character of public education. This position, when taken by the staff of Soviet schools, is attacked by the supporters of the League of the Godless much as ecclesiastics in this country complain of it—only from the other side. The only difference is that the critics in the U.S.S.R. complain of teaching that 'although a religious, is not anti religious', while, in this country, critics will complain of 'not anti religious, but a religious' teaching. No doubt, the British ecclesiastics and their sympathizers will maintain that their religion is the right one. But so also do the Russian rationalists. How then is a compromise possible?

One may be inclined to argue that the difficulty is merely transitional and is bound to disappear with the consolidation of the regime. The Bolsheviks are not an ordinary party such as the Whigs and the Tories in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. A closer parallel might be found in Cromwell's Ironsides, and the latter were certainly not indifferent towards Popish teaching in English schools. But out of the Ironsides, the Whigs arose and the latter, in due course, became indifferent, even towards Anglo Catholicism. Will Bolshevism continue indefinitely to be an ardent and exclusive faith, claiming the whole of man's higher interests and all his readiness for sacrifice for higher ends? And where, then, will the Christian Churches be? Ignoring speculation about the remote future, and concentrating on our own day, it is very difficult to contend that the Russian Communists have already achieved their task to such an extent that they could retreat into an eighteenth-century Whig position without risking ultimate defeat and the loss of all their achievements. But if they cannot thus retreat, if they are bound to continue to mobilize the nation's highest spiritual energies to achieve a new and better order of society, they are bound to collide with some essential features of present-day Christianity. Not a Roman Catholic, but a Protestant who is anything but narrow minded, General Smuts, said recently

'We stand, as it were, at a great break or divide of history, in a crisis in which old traditions and principles are no longer accepted, where the greater portion of mankind are casting round and searching for a new world outlook, a new life principle, a new code to follow and obey.

We are looking for a short cut to economic and social reforms, and run the risk of deserting the fundamental principles on which our

<sup>139</sup>Besides, inequality of the status of the various Churches according to their political behaviour, would raise new difficulties for the U.S.S.R. This has already been illustrated by Western reactions on the Greek Uniate Ukrainians re-joining the Greek Orthodox Church in spite of the obvious origin of the the Greek Uniate Church through incorporation of the Ukraine into the former Polish Kingdom.



Christian civilization is founded. We run the risk of exchanging our spiritual birthright for purely material advantage. Fundamentally, the world has no need for a new order or a new plan, but only the honest and courageous application of the historical Christian idea' 140

Anyone who knows revolutionary Russia, or is familiar with the struggle of millions of continental Socialists, knows that the antithesis between struggle for a new order of society and spiritual values is wrong. There are Christians in this country who reject such an antithesis. But although I am in strong sympathy with the latter I am not sure whether it is not General Smuts who interprets rightly the meaning—and the necessary social function—of historical Christianity.

The last Archbishop of Canterbury made a statement<sup>141</sup> that is highly interesting in discussing our problem. There is, Dr Temple stated, nothing in economic Communism that is incompatible with Christianity, and the association of Communism<sup>142</sup> with atheism is to be regarded as a mere historical accident. The first statement deals with the conditions of a Communist society, once established. In this sense it can hardly be contested. Ideals of economic equality were highly acceptable to primitive Christianity and to many radical reformers. On the other hand Marxism, in its philosophical conceptions, emphasizes humanistic ideals. It is true, that often, for example in papal encyclicals, an attempt is made to show a necessary connection between private property and emphasis on human individuality. But here the argument is definitely political and the disagreement arises from a difference of opinion as to the effect of given social institutions on human life. There is no disagreement between Christianity and Marxism—as distinct, say, from Hitlerism—as to the purpose of social institutions, which is to further the development of human personality.

The second half of Dr Temple's statement raises more difficult issues. Is the clash between the Church and revolutionary Socialism during the period of transition from capitalism to Socialism really mere historical accident? Could it be avoided by alternative policies of one or both of them, given what they are? The Anglo Saxon, with whom the 'no bishop, no king' is a mere historical memory, may be inclined to answer this question in the affirmative, especially if he, like Dr Temple, embodies a tradition of interpreting Christianity in the sense of social progress. But Dr Temple would have been the last to deny that such an interpretation of Christianity was not the only influential one even in his country and in his age. On the Continent—not only, but in an especially high degree in Russia—another interpretation of Christianity has, hitherto, been dominant. This social reactionary interpretation of Christianity is undoubtedly incompatible with Socialism. It is in appealing to the feelings of General Franco and his followers that the most

<sup>140</sup>The Times, 8 April 1942

<sup>141</sup>The Times, 5 May 1942

<sup>142</sup>Of course Dr Temple was speaking of present-day Communism i.e. political Marxism, not about Communist tendencies in history in general, some of which were consciously based upon Christianity.

controversial statements of British politicians about the 'Christian' character of the order to come have been made. Marxists will hardly believe that the association of political Christianity with Franco and Darlan is a mere historical accident, but will be inclined to trace its roots through the whole history of the Church and its association with the powers that be. But even if this association should be broken, in due course, and 'Christian Civilization' should cease to be a political formula under which the Polish Government in exile tried to claim Lithuania, much deeper issues would arise.

Whether Dr Temple was right or wrong in regarding the historical connection between Church and reaction, and between Marxism and atheism, as accidental, i.e. as something that could be changed without either side ceasing to be what it essentially is, revolutionary Socialism has certainly a particular set of social standards. These standards centre on self sacrifice for achieving a better society, i.e. just that which General Smuts regards as a secondary issue. Marxism, at least in the Bolshevik form, is itself something like a religion in the sense that it makes an appeal to the supreme spiritual forces in mankind. Precisely for this reason its reconciliation with other appeals to the same forces is not a simple task. Dostoevsky, who knew the spirit of revolutionary Russian intellectuals, believed that there was an essential and insurmountable antithesis, and that those who tried to improve mankind's conditions in this world deprived it of spiritual freedom, and were doing the antichrist's work.<sup>143</sup> The Russian mystic—and the mystical, Slavophil tendency in Russian thought in general—is not identical with the whole of Christianity. But there is a serious problem, both for Christians and for Marxists. It is not the sociologist's task to answer the question whether what is to come is a competition between two forces, both essentially religious,<sup>144</sup> to be decided by the future development of society. In principle, there might also be another way. There may be competition in building the new society between those who draw the spiritual forces necessary for accomplishing this task from the Marxist, and those who draw it from the traditional Christian set of spiritual values. In such a case no state—and least of all the Soviet state—would be inclined to make any distinction between those who help in its creative work for this or for that philosophical reason.

There are, in the U.S.S.R. too, people who attempt a reconciliation of Christianity with the new social tasks in the same sense as, in this country, does the Dean of Canterbury for example. A believer in the historical evolution of human ideals cannot *a priori* deny that an evolution even of Christian ideals may be possible—even if, as I think, General Smuts has truly interpreted the present position of historical Christianity. If those who attempt such an evolution should prove suc-

<sup>143</sup>See his wonderful *Grand Inquisitor* in the *Brothers Karamazov*. A Westerner Selma Lagerlöf has discussed the same issue with another evaluation in *The Miracles of Antichrist*.

<sup>144</sup>Religious in the sense we use the word here does of course not mean belief in metaphysics, but the development of a certain spiritual attitude.

cessful and influential, the connection between the Soviet state and atheism would prove, if not an accidental, then, in any case, a mere historical phenomenon

(b) *Marxist Philosophy in the U S S R*

The contest with religion not in the higher sense discussed above, but with the most primitive superstitious beliefs of the orthodox Russian peasant has determined one side of the Soviet's approach to philosophical problems. The other side has been determined by factional struggles within Bolshevism itself. For the interpretation of Marxist philosophy has formed an essential element in these struggles.

Classical Marxist philosophy contains a very limited number of clearly established fundamentals. Once one goes beyond them Marxism is open to very diverse interpretations. It is clearly established that the Marxist outlook is objectivistic and deterministic. It acknowledges the existence of a world independent of the human mind. This world is subject to objective laws essentially of the character of the 'Laws of Nature' which we observe and attempt to apprehend though, at present, we know only an infinitesimal part of these laws. But Marxism is optimistic in the sense that it believes mankind capable of continuing to learn more and more of these laws. Man must not be afraid of being confronted, at any point, with an absolute limit of scientific experience beyond which no understanding would be possible apart from theological systems and conjecture. And, as Lenin wrote, beyond the recognition of the objectivity of the world, materialism 'does not mean anything'. In particular the identification of Marxism with certain nineteenth century conceptions of matter is decisively rejected.<sup>141</sup> So also, as we have seen above, is the primitive materialist's rejection of the reality and efficiency of human thought as a motive force in history. According to Lenin, philosophical idealism is not mere nonsense as it is 'from the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism

From the standpoint of dialectical materialism, philosophical idealism is a one sided, exaggerated development of one of the features, sides, facets of knowledge into an absolute, divorced from matter, from nature, apotheosized'.<sup>142</sup> The human mind and its products (or ideologies as Marxism calls them) must be regarded as part of the objective reality, being subjected to the objective laws which determine the course of the world. Bolshevism would be the last to deny that these phenomena are a very influential force in the social world.

Besides the recognition of the objective character of the world, the other essential element in Marxist philosophy is the conception that the laws governing it are dialectical, i.e. non static, but dynamic. There is,

<sup>141</sup> The sole 'property' of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of being an objective reality of existing outside our mind (Lenin *Materialism and Empiricism*, in *Selected Works*, Vol XI, p. 317)

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. p. 87. Engels in *Ludwig Feuerbach* already took a very similar attitude to German classical idealistic philosophy.

according to Marxism, no 'eternal order', either in nature in general or in the special sector of it which we call human society. All things are in continuous evolution. This evolution is not a mere growing of elements already in existence from the very beginning, but the result of a constant struggle between forces opposed to each other. 'The world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down'. This 'very good exposition of the rudiments of dialectical materialism', as Lenin has called it, was written nearly 2,500 years ago by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Marxist historians of philosophy, those of Soviet Russia in particular, have devoted much learning to demonstrating that what now is called 'Dialectical materialism', far from being the invention of some nineteenth century genius, has been the outcome of the long contest of opposing tendencies in Western philosophical thought. Most failures of primitive, metaphysical, materialism are due to its inability to understand evolution, and especially the evolution of human thought. On the other hand, any idealistic explanation of the world, i.e. one that is based upon spiritual forces beyond nature, will tend to accept and to worship these forces as eternal and immutable.<sup>147</sup>

The reader, as many people have done before him, will ask why such a general outlook as that described has been called 'materialist' by its prophets and, thus, exposed to the worst misunderstandings. This is not a reference to the biased juxtaposition of materialism and moral forces which the Philistine in Germany and elsewhere has used so often. Engels has already poked fun at him. There is no reason, for any unbiased observer of present history, to believe that the belief in supernatural forces is a necessary condition for the readiness for self sacrifice in the cause of the supreme values of mankind. Attempts have often been made to prove the truth of Christianity by its martyrology. Present-day Communism can stand this test just as well.

But besides the Philistine's mistake of considering all people a-moral who do not believe in his god, there is another common misunderstanding of the term 'materialism' to which Marxism has been exposed. This misunderstanding was shared by a majority of the adherents of Marxism in Central Europe and by a very considerable section of the Russian Bolsheviks themselves. Historically the term 'materialism' is associated with certain nineteenth century conceptions of nature and 'matter'. In spite of all that Lenin has written to bring Dialectical Materialism into line with twentieth-century physics,<sup>148</sup> this association has not yet been

<sup>147</sup>Hegel! It is true, tried to develop dialectical idealism. But it is highly problematic both whether he was successful and whether when doing so he remained a true idealist. In twentieth-century Marxism there is a certain neo-Hegelian trend (as represented by Lukacz or Max Adler, who declared himself neo-Kantian), but by all its representatives evidently absolute standards are developed.

<sup>148</sup>His main philosophical work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* is mainly devoted to this task—although even in this case the historical limitations of a book written in 1909 sometimes served as an 'argument' say in 1936.

dissolved. And thus for various reasons. First, the average adult educationist in the U S S R feels naively troubled if called upon to drop some primitive conception of matter (as opposed to God and the Saints) as something one can touch and see. In consequence, the acceptance of Einstein's theory of relativity as well as of the modern *quantum* theory in physics has, in the U S S R., been opposed by primitive 'godless' adult educationists and people representing their view on the 'philosophical front' of the Party. The eternal validity of the tri-dimensional space, of the absolute time and, Holiest of Holies, of the Copernican Newtonian conception of celestial movement, has been defended by such people with the same fervour as theological dogmas have been defended by other, and more outspoken, theologians. The only excuse for the Russian 'Marxist' propagandist is that, in his everyday activities, he has to face theologians of the most primitive kind against whom Galileo's '*E pur si muove*' is still a topical argument. Certainly this crude consideration induced Lenin and his followers to stick to a description which, however difficult in academic discussions, proved the most radical and outspoken term for opposing what they were bound to hold to be superstition, and an ideological stronghold of social reaction.

But there was still another argument for retaining the historical, nineteenth-century term 'materialism' instead of some simple more neutral description like 'realism'. In the development of Bolshevism, any attack upon the philosophical tenets of materialism as incompatible with modern science<sup>149</sup> has been associated with an attack against basing Socialist tactics on a scientific analysis of the objective conditions of the struggle. It was impossible for such an ardent controversialist as Lenin to resist the temptation to reproach leftist ultra revolutionaries like Bogdanov by comparing their faith in the miracles which the revolutionary spirit could realize and faith in those other, more primitive miracles which the village priest disseminated.

Hardly less dangerous a source of dissent amongst the Marxists than the misunderstanding of the term 'materialism' has proved that of the other term, 'dialectics'. The only explanation of the use of this term is that Marx and Engels as pupils of Hegel took over his own specially developed terminology which he called dialectics. That terminology was suggested by the spirit of Hegel's own philosophical system which tried to understand evolution as a 'dialectic' movement of pure thought. Marx and Engels, to use their own expression, turned the teacher's theory upside down. But they retained his terminology. They even defended it when confronted, within their own party, with elements that, by rejecting the conceptions of class struggle and by replacing

<sup>149</sup>In the period following the defeat of the 1905 Revolution these attacks, by Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, and others were connected with advocating leftist, adventurous, tactics—and this proved for Lenin the main opportunity for dealing with philosophical problems. In post revolutionary Russia the struggle for collectivization of agriculture provided the main occasion for discussing Marxist philosophies—in this case against leftist representatives of wishful thinking as well as against right wing opponents of collectivization who emphasized the 'materialist' regard for the objective difficulties.

dialectics with ordinary materialism, tried to turn revolutionary Socialism into ordinary Liberalism

From the point of view of the historical development of Marxism this is a sufficient explanation of the role which Hegelian terminology still plays in Marxian writings. But it is insufficient to demonstrate to perplexed people, in the U.S.S.R. as well as in this country, what this terminology does in fact mean. The reader, for his consolation, may be assured that I shall not try to torture him by attempting such an explanation in a book written for the general public. Even in full consciousness of the terrible risks I run when provoking the wrath of orthodox exegetes I should, further, like to assure my readers that, in many years of thorough study, I have found nothing interesting in Marxist theories that could not be explained without the use of Hegelian terminology. Further, I think that the victories of the Red Army, although, in my opinion, undoubtedly due to essential forces of Marxism, are in no way due to some mystic force of the negation, the negation of the negation, and so on. Therefore, the time spent by many people in Cambridge and Oxford on the commendable study of the 'mystery' of the successes of the Red Army should have been devoted to the study of the driving forces and the historical development of the Russian Revolution rather than to the study of some mystical formulas understood by very few of those who use them.

The use of formulas so nebulous that one could use them for 'proving' the most various theses has certainly furthered misunderstandings. But it was not the reason of dissent amongst the Marxists. Once there is a political movement, not to speak of a strong organization, based upon a given ideology that forms its unifying link, and once this movement begins to develop, you will find all the great spiritual struggles of mankind fought out within this movement and within the framework of the accepted formulas of its fundamental ideology. Marxism, just as any other elaborated philosophical system, can serve as such a platform,<sup>1</sup> just as the Aristotelian Thomist philosophy served the same purpose for thirteenth to fourteenth-century Nominalists and Realists. One may stress the materialist side of Marxism. In general, a person who does so will be inclined to emphasize the objective limitations set to the actions of a Marxist party. For instance, a 1919 German right wing Social Democrat would regard the introduction of Socialism as not feasible in a defeated country, or a 1928 Russian right wing Bolshevik would deem agricultural collectivization a hopeless attack against the overwhelming forces of Russian society. The reverse of this outlook is made clear by Stalin's explanation, in the *History of the C.P.S.U.*, that Marxist materialism is not metaphysical and mechanical, but dialectical and 'contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things' — for they all have their negative and

<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that all applications and interpretations of the fundamental ideology are equally 'right' in the sense that all equally correspond to its original meaning.

positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing, and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggles between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing constitutes the internal content of the process of development. Hence we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though at present they do not constitute the predominant force' <sup>171</sup>

On the other hand an idealist who wants to see his conceptions of an ideal society realized in his own time, without considering the objective obstacles, will, being a 'left wing Communist', tend to overstress the dialectical side of Marxism. Feeling himself a Marxist he cannot deny the importance of the material facts. But he can contend that they were just turning into their opposite and that the ideas he cherishes were just the anti thesis called to replace the dying old world. As against him, Stalin would stress the strength of the materialist element in Marxism. 'In order not to find itself in the position of idle dreamers, the party of the proletariat must not base its activities on abstract "principles of human reason", but on the concrete conditions of the material life of society not on the good wishes of "great men", but on the real needs of development of the material life of society' <sup>172</sup> This general statement is illustrated by acid sneers at the 'ideal plans' and 'all-embracing projects' of the pre-1917 Russian lower middle class Radicals. But it is quite clear to anyone who understands how to read Russian political writings that Stalin is sneering at Marxist 'blue prints', too, Marx and Lenin themselves perhaps being among the great men not all of whose 'good wishes' must necessarily be realized. In spite of this I think Marx and Lenin would have readily endorsed a description of both sides of dialectical materialism like the one quoted above, without Hegelian phrases, but with a clear and intelligible appeal to reasonable people's common sense.

I hope, by now, the reader will have understood some of the essential aspects of the problem and, more especially, the fact that dialectical materialism is something more than the mysterious algebra of some German professors and left wing intellectuals. To prove anything by dialectical materialism is impossible, just as it is impossible to prove any physical statement by the mere arrangement of the instruments for an experiment. But although method is not knowledge, good methods of approach are an essential condition for scientific success. The facts, including especially the development of the Russian Revolution, have proved dialectical materialism to be a most fruitful approach to social science as well as to its practical application, politics. On the other hand, the downfall of fascism in our day has refuted attempts to interpret

<sup>171</sup> Loc. cit., pp 109-10

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., pp 115-6

politics apart from class, attempts that were fashionable for some time and are still the fashionable form of political science in the U.S.A. But the question arises why a method undoubtedly successful in a certain field is applied to quite other fields of knowledge. Why do the Russian Communists, instead of simply stating that they regard dialectical materialism as the soundest foundation of their politics, in the sense that nineteenth-century British Liberals based their politics on Benthamism, make of dialectical materialism a general philosophy to be spread by all the propagandist instruments of the state? Would the most successful physicist seriously attempt to use the arrangement of his physical experiments for answering social questions?

Part of the answer to our problem is that the scientist very often attempts such a generalization in a subtle way—and not always without success. Darwinism, one of the greatest achievements of biological science, was—on its methodological side—the result of an application of Malthusianism, an economic hypothesis, to biological facts. On the other hand, in many cases, a biological (or physical) theory has served, since the days of Appius Menna, to justify the existing order of society as the only 'natural one', or to produce far reaching political consequences, as does German and other racialism. Men like to draw broad inferences for their general outlook from scientific achievements, and these inferences, in many cases, are full of actual social consequences. Not only in the U.S.S.R., but also in most Western countries Einstein's theory of Relativity, in consequence of a curious misunderstanding by its popularizers and in strict opposition to its physical meaning<sup>173</sup> has served as a 'foundation' for a general 'relativist' approach to philosophical problems. So one can hardly reproach the Russian Communists for having been displeased when a physical discovery was used by the public of the NEP period to demonstrate that all so-called truths, including those of Marxism, had a very relative meaning. In the last few pre-war years the most recent physical achievements, especially the quantum theory, have been used to 'prove' alleged metaphysical truths such as that there is no objective determination of the movements of the fundamental elements of the world, that there is some kind of 'freedom of the wave', that the world has a beginning and an end, together with the theological implications accessible to scientific methods, etc. It is true, all these sorts of inferences from scientific theories go far beyond the sphere of science. But, in many cases, the scientific explorers themselves are the philosophical popularizers of such results. So one can understand—although not justify—how the Russians, in the heat of controversy, drew non-sociological inferences from a theory the real achievements of which lie in the sociological field.<sup>174</sup> Only in recent times the

<sup>173</sup>The Theory of Relativity springs from a relativist approach to the standards by which physical processes are to be measured in a search for formulations of the physical laws that would be valid independently of any concrete approach of the observer, i.e. that would be valid under all possible conditions.

<sup>174</sup>For the philosophical discussions in the U.S.S.R. on physical problems see the present author's article in *Zeitschrift fuer Sozialforschung* (New York-Paris), Vol. 1939, No. 1/2 (in German).



misuse of dialectical materialism as a test on the orthodoxy of physical theories has come to an end.<sup>175</sup> It may be hoped that the people responsible for these kind of debates have meanwhile realized that the time spent on them could much better be applied to atomic research.

The above mentioned example of Darwinism shows that the fruits of generalizations, or rather 'fashions of thinking' have not always proved worthless, even if, as in the case of Malthusianism, the original starting point of the generalization can hardly be defended any longer. The sympathy which some world famous physicists (such as Langevin) show for dialectical materialism goes far beyond what is likely to arise from the mere left wing political sympathy of an intellectual. The generalization of this method, although hardly demonstrable in a purely scientific way, seems able to produce valuable suggestions though, of course, they are no more than suggestions. Some people in the U S S R, insisted that certain physical theories must be wrong because they contradicted the principles of dialectical materialism'. These people have been reproached by more critical minds in the U S S R.<sup>176</sup> since such an approach proves not only an essential misunderstanding of physics, but also an idealist approach to philosophy, in the sense that man is supposed to give his laws to nature, instead of vice versa. It was Lenin himself who found in such an approach the characteristics of Kantian idealism.

Rightly or wrongly, the tendency to generalize exists, in any country and within any general outlook. The Western physicist who makes generalizations of this kind may, if sufficiently self critical (as he not always is) clearly distinguish between those statements he makes *qua* physicist, and those he makes *qua* Christian or Communist. The difficulty with the Russian Communist fighting 'on the philosophical front' is that he can hardly distinguish between those statements he makes *qua* sociologist—including statements on the sociological consequences likely to arise from philosophical theories—and those he makes *qua* Communist, as an adherent of a certain political faith. For he is convinced that this faith in its totality is based on certain sociological achievements though he will not be quite certain which of these achievements are due to the Marxist theory and which to its not always orthodox application by the Soviet state. Worst of all, he cannot even make a clear distinction between what he believes to be the right interpretation of a certain political faith in its application to non political matters, and what may be relevant or irrelevant for the state based upon such a faith.

True, the Soviet state is very careful in applying its powers in such fields. There have been cases where, evidently, a 'biological' theory mainly served as a hardly concealed instrument for encouraging, quite apart from science, fascist racial theories. Apart from such political cases hardly any learned opponent of what was believed to be dialectical

<sup>175</sup> Cf. A. Vavilov's article on the twentieth anniversary of Lenin's death in *Pod Snamenem Marksizma* 1944, No. 2.

<sup>176</sup> See loc. cit., *Zeitschrift fuer Sozialforschung*, 1939, p. 202.

materialism in the field of science has met any harder fate than being 'reduced to a research professorship, excluded from the dunes of general teaching or university administration but with full opportunity for scientific work. But however moderate the practice, the very fact of state interest in such things is tainted with all the dangers of totalitarianism. Nobody has the right to reproach the Russians with such things if he recognizes as a full democracy a country where the Dayton (Kentucky) trial was possible, and where in a majority of the states, including that of New York, teachers' oaths are demanded that clearly go far beyond the limits of civic loyalty. The mutual relations between the public interest in education and that in the freedom of scientific thought form a problem for democracy in general, not only for the U.S.S.R.

But certainly, totalitarianism, whatever its degree, is a danger in itself. It is a danger not only from the point of view of liberal theories which the Russians may reject but from that of the very foundations on which they are building—the full development of all intellectual forces of the nation. At a certain stage in historical development no price may be too high that must be paid—provided it *must* be paid—for abolishing the enormous waste of national possibilities inherent in a class-divided capitalist society. At a certain stage a strong and therefore one-sided faith, uniting and inspiring the most active forces of a nation may prove the essential condition for national survival. Marxism has no reason to be ashamed of the way it stood the supreme test that any ideology which aspires to shaping human history has to stand, on the Russian battle-fields and in the European torture-chambers. The strength of Marxism, and especially of Russian Bolshevism is its faith in human progress which other people have lost. But there are no theoretical limits to human progress. Least of all could Marxism, without becoming inconsistent, effectively claim on behalf of any of its concrete tenets the right to oppose further progress.

## Conclusions: Marxism and the National Revolution of the Soviet Peoples

WE HAVE DISCUSSED SOME of the characteristic features of present Soviet ideology sufficiently to form an opinion about its origin and character. A revolution, begun under the leadership of the working classes and a working class ideology has resulted in the abolition of the existing class division and the creation of national unity. This result has been achieved by the joint endeavours of a group of nationalities which linked by a common past crowned by that result, regard themselves as distinct from others. Some national, although not purely Russian form of Socialism has come into existence as the result of a revolution begun under the banner of a purely internationalist ideology. Some of the new developments mean an absorption by new Russia of what remained of the vital forces of old Russia, some mean an adaptation of the revolution to the needs of creating national unity for the defence of the new state. Apart from the absorption of the still vital sections of the old intelligentsia by the new, it is the peasant with his changed though still non-Western working class outlook whose voice is most clearly in evidence wherever Stalin has departed from original Marxist ideology. But the statement of such changes, and their sociological origin, does not answer the question of whether the essentials of the original ideology have survived, nor assess their actual importance.

The mere fact that a revolution starting under the banner of an international ideology has resulted in the establishment of a new national way of life, does not mean a negation of the international character of Socialism beyond the extent to which the international character of Protestantism was 'denied' when it proved victorious in the Netherlands and in England, or the international character of Liberalism was 'denied' when it proved victorious in the U.S.A. and in France. In all these cases the struggle in which the new ideology won its first and decisive victories determined some of the essentials of its outlook. But however national the achievements, they did not cease to influence the further evolution of mankind. Hitherto, internationalism has only meant the mutual interrelations of nations. The fact that a certain ideology has, with various adaptations, succeeded in becoming the leading ideology of a given nation or, as with the U.S.S.R., group of nations, means that it has passed from the stage of propaganda to that of practical historical importance. No ideology on the stage of history looks as well as it did in the 'pure air' of Utopia. orthodox Marxists were not the first people in history who have had to experience bitter disappointment in seeing the hiatus between the ideal and reality. In spite of this, any

such reality, however it may lag behind the original hopes, has proved an important step forward in the evolution of mankind. Few doubt today that the huge sacrifices of the English Civil War, of the French, and Russian Revolutions, were fully justified in the sense that a sacrifice of human life can be justified at all. There are not many external wars about which the same statement could be made.

The more evident the adaptation of the original Marxist ideology to Russian conditions has become, the more disputed is the question whether what has grown in the U.S.S.R. is, however adapted and modified, Marxist Socialism at all. The internal stability of Stalinist Russia and the living strength of her ideology can hardly be denied after she has withstood the hardest test, more successfully than any other contemporary system. But there are still people who believe that what has stood this test is simply 'everlasting Russia', with a strange ideology at last successfully digested and overcome. The facts hardly justify such an interpretation: the difference between the achievement of the revolutionary and even the best ones of the pre-revolutionary regime is even greater than in the corresponding seventeenth-century English and eighteenth-century French historical records. Undoubtedly, the Russians fought heroically in 1812. But it must not be forgotten that they won no battle. Kutusov, very reasonably, avoided that decisive battle before the gates of Moscow which Stalin risked and won in December 1941. Nearer to 1917 the Tsarist Russian military and political achievements were very poor even against such relatively weak opponents as the Turks or Japanese. During the first World War, Russia was opposed by about a third of that military strength she had to face in the last war—and broke down. The significant fact is not merely that the Soviet regime has built an industry and a mechanized agriculture, and achieved educational standards to which no alternative regime could have aspired, but that, in spite of the enormous sacrifices necessary for such achievements, the Soviet has succeeded in creating a stronger spiritual unity in the Russian and all the other Soviet peoples than had been possible at any previous time. This does not look like the achievement of a regime whose main merit, according to the judgement of those friendly critics, would be that it had returned to the best achievements of its predecessors. Nor does it support the view that nationalized economics are a mere technique the application of which does not prove the Socialist character of a society. Of course, it also does not prove the presence of those ideological characteristics that are regarded by many Western critics as essentials of Socialism.

It is comparatively easy to criticize these misunderstandings. A positive description of the real relations between the shape that the Russian revolutionary ideology has taken now, and its original Marxist starting-point is much more difficult. Here a division between various spheres of the development seems advisable, for it is hardly possible to formulate one answer that would fit all the problems we have discussed in the present book.

Some of the divergences supposed, by most observers, to exist between Stalinist and original Marxist ideology are based upon misunderstandings of the Marxist theory current in the Western labour movement, especially in Germany. Mechanical and fatalist interpretations of that theory have contributed much to the defeat of the labour movement in Germany and elsewhere. Other identifications of Marxism with left-wing intellectual currents say, in cultural problems, have contributed to the isolation of non Russian Marxism from the broad strata of the people. In most of these fields a really strong case can be made for the Stalinist claim to have removed mere distortions, or misunderstandings by the epigones of original Marxism.

One of the most discussed aspects of Marxism is its attitude towards the active rôle played by ideologies and by individuals, as motive factors in history. Here a case can be made for a differentiation between Bolshevism and Marxism as expressed since the sixties of the last century, but not between Bolshevism as represented in 1902 in Lenin's work *What To Do Now* and Bolshevism, say, as interpreted in the *History of the C P S U (B)* published in 1938. Western Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg, even if they agreed with Lenin in the general revolutionary outlook, criticized him, after the publication of the former work. Lenin had certainly replaced the traditional Western conception of Socialism as a glorified trade unionist movement by his conception of an organization of 'professional revolutionaries', i.e. of the traditional type of the revolutionary Russian intelligentsia merely connected with the trade unionist movement. A case can be made, and has been made,<sup>11</sup> on this basis to prove that Bolshevism—including the original position of Marx and Engels themselves at the eve of the German 1848 revolution—was rather the expression of the needs of countries which developed late, demanding a combination of democratic and Socialist revolution, than a fitting ideology for the labour movement of the highly developed Western countries such as Marx and Engels intended to shape. In view of the phenomenon of fascism it is questionable whether an interpretation of Marxism in Rosenberg's sense would necessarily exclude its importance for the Western countries. Undoubtedly Marx and Engels would have rejected decisively any interpretation of their theory as best fitted for countries like Russia, China, India, Spain—maybe also Japan and Germany. But it is most doubtful for any student of present international developments whether such an interpretation would allow, to Marxism, a smaller sphere of historical influence than the original conceptions of its founders who thought that Socialism was, for the next few centuries, essentially a problem for Western Europe and the U.S.A.

But in whatever sense the question of the Marxist orthodoxy of Bolshevism is answered, the comparison between the Russian and the German results is convincing for any student of facts, and not of dogma. A Marxism interpreted in a sense which excludes Bolshevism could in our day, hardly be judged otherwise than as an offspring of nineteenth-

<sup>11</sup>By A. Rosenberg in *A History of Bolshevism* London, 1930

century Liberalism, which shared in the latter's collapse without having shared in its victories. In 1921<sup>17</sup> one of the cleverest and most scholarly representatives of Western Marxism, Otto Bauer, contended that while classical Marxism, in opposing the anarchy of capitalist production, had mainly stressed the necessity of planning, now, in opposition to militarist bureaucratic rule during the first World War, the working classes had to stress the need for freedom and free initiative, in the sense of guild Socialism. It is merely necessary to repeat such statements, some 20 years after, to see how hopelessly wrong the Westernizing interpretation (and, in this case, criticism) of Marxism went, in the light of the actual course of history.

There are certainly real differences between present-day Russian and classical Marxist ideology. These concern, for example, the 'withering away of the state', and the reinterpretation of the future Communist society. With all their implications these theoretical changes imply dropping those ultimately anarchic conceptions of nineteenth-century Liberalism which Marxism, though its strongest opponent, shared. Probably future historians will interpret this fact as the dropping of the Utopian elements in Marxism—Utopian in the sense that they did not correspond to the tasks which Marxism, in its time, had to solve. To say that many ideas uttered by the levellers were Utopian means simply that these ideas corresponded to the possibilities rather of the nineteenth than of seventeenth-century England. It does not mean at all that the levellers were 'wrong' in an absolute sense. But Marxism measures the historical efficiency of ideologies by their ability to influence *actual* history. So it must accept the criticism of the Russian reality independent of the possibility that in 200 years time some Marxist statements which are now superseded may be honoured as the greatest of prophecies.

Other corrections of original Marxist ideology in the U.S.S.R. of to-day and probably the most important ones, are simply reflections of the transition of the political programme of an opposition group to its realization. To state that Soviet law needs different interpretation from the one which Marxism gave for that of a capitalist society, or that the relations between state and economics can no longer be described by the classical Marxist formulas, means simply in other words that the latter have fulfilled their task in helping to bring about a new type of society. Such a new type of society is, from the Marxist point of view, bound to follow its own new type of laws. To say that the Soviet state emphasizes the social advantage of the stability of matrimonial relations, or of the teacher's authority in education, is another way of saying that this state has succeeded in abolishing the former functions of marriage, especially in the eastern parts of the country, as a kind of female slavery, and in educating a new generation of teachers truly devoted to its tasks in the new society. No political programme or theory ought to be discredited for being dropped for such reasons.

<sup>17</sup>In *Bolshevism and Social Democracy* (German), published in Vienna.

A third main group of modifications seems to be due to the actual conditions of the Russian experiment. Some show a distinctly local, Russian, flavour: the premiums, for example, paid from the seventh child onwards<sup>128</sup> can hardly be understood except as a consequence of the concrete effects of collectivization on the Russian village community. Much more important features, say the original attitude towards religion, and probably even some implications of the one-party system are best understood in relation to the specific needs of the Russian Revolution. Attempts to generalize such features, whether in the affirmative or in the negative sense, are bound to result in completely wrong conclusions.

This holds especially true of some measures which the Russians, having avoided them for 20 years, have applied since 1938 under the immediate threat of Nazi aggression. On 28 December, 1938, i.e. as an immediate reaction to Munich, the liberty of labour to move from one state enterprise to another was closely restricted by making the amount of social insurance in case of illness, etc., and the claim for factory built dwelling places dependent on the length of employment in a given enterprise. On 26 June, 1940, i.e. as an immediate reaction to the fall of France and to the fact that the Soviet now had to face an eventual on-front German attack, that freedom of movement was entirely abolished. Shortly after, educational reforms were enacted which restricted free access to the universities in the interest of strengthening the supply of skilled labour, if necessary by compulsory enlistment.<sup>129</sup> Impossible as it seems to bring all these facts to accord with the spirit of the 1936 Constitution, great injustice seems to be done to this Constitution, as well as to the historical importance of the U.S.S.R. in general, by interpreting measures of this kind in any other way than as emergency measures modifying the original outlook of Soviet society, but necessitated by an extremely dangerous threat from outside.

More harm has probably been done to the U.S.S.R. by those of its friends who attempted to describe its present state as a realization of all conceivable human ideals than could be done by anti-Soviet propagandists if the latter had been left to their own ingenuity instead of being supplied with cheap comparisons between ideal and reality. Few of those who now have the opportunity to meet the Red Army in Central Europe, after a large part of its original cadres were destroyed and replaced by freshly educated peasants from the Volga, the Kuban and perhaps from Central Asia who have gone through the ordeal of a long war, regard what they see as an essay in quick emancipation of backward populations. If they did, they would get a true impression of what has been achieved under most difficult conditions. They could not deny the capacity for world transformation of the theory that has achieved such results whether they like or dislike the immediate outcome of that special application. But most people are inclined to draw comparisons

<sup>128</sup>See p. 39

<sup>129</sup>See p. 42

if not with some ideal of what Russia ought to be, then at least with the technical and cultural level achieved in the most advanced Western countries preserved after a war that has devoured a large part of their national income but only a small fraction of their manhood. I doubt whether even the domestic authority of Soviet propaganda has been increased by the opportunity now offered to millions of Soviet citizens to make themselves familiar with the external conditions under which Western peoples, including their working classes, live. It is completely true that in a comfortable flat and amongst nicely dressed people there may be hopelessness and despair; the comparison frequently drawn by Western Social Democrats between the standard of life of an unemployed Western trade unionist and that of the average worker in one of the more overcrowded of the Russian cities does not prove anything on the issues of real importance—the individual happiness of the citizen and his chance to achieve in due course a higher standard of material welfare. But it proves quite a lot against the average Communist propaganda inside and outside the U.S.S.R. Inside the U.S.S.R., particularly amongst the Red soldiers who now have seen the West, the reaction may hit very near the mark. The realization of a disproportion between material standards and moral strength may simply work as an additional argument in favour of national self-consciousness. Outside the U.S.S.R., the most likely outcome of the meeting of the two civilizations will be the feeling that ‘this is not the Socialism we have dreamed of’. Indeed, it is not. Dreams have a certain degree of unreality in themselves, and it is superficial to suppose that this unreality is reduced by transferring one’s hopes to a strange country with different conditions, different needs—maybe, also different hopes. But serious internationalism is not an integration of dreams, it is the realization of certain common forces working under very different conditions towards some aims the realization of which, however different, may allow for a higher degree of integration of human civilization than before. International Socialism is no generalization of some pattern, neither the Russian nor the Anglo-Saxon. It is an attempt at shaping the society to come in every country by the way of integrations in which all the valuable elements of all the national civilizations may play their part, however different the results may be.

In discussing the specific national features of present Soviet ideology we have, in fact, already answered the question whether and how far it may be able to spread, in its concrete forms.<sup>121</sup> The specific Soviet system, as distinct from Socialism in general, can even less be ‘exported’ than British Parliamentarism or the Liberal conceptions of 1776 and 1789. For the latter were based on some abstract conceptions that could be applied to any social system formally complying with them, whilst

<sup>121</sup>We are discussing the matter not from the point of view of those people who regard any nationalization of the essential means of production as ‘Bolshevism’, nor even from the point of view whether some important elements of the Communist ideology are likely to enter the future synthesis in all countries, as such a competent non-Socialist critic as Prof. Carr believes (*Conditions of Peace* p. 110).



the concrete analysis of the given system forms an essential in Marxist, and especially Bolshevik theory. For 100 years Hungarian landlords, merely because they have successfully preserved the social and political conditions of the British eighteenth-century oligarchy, have been appealing with some success to the sympathies of modern British parliamentary democracy, strictly opposed as the latter would be to any panegyrist of eighteenth century British parliamentarism. In the same country there was, in 1919, a short lived Soviet régime. But, as anyone informed about the real conditions knows, the Hungarian Soviet, had it not been overthrown within some 100 days by the counter-revolution, would have incurred the sharpest criticism by its Russian 'model' for having failed to adopt the two essential conditions of Bolshevik success in Russia: the transfer of the big estates to the peasants and the liberation of the oppressed nationalities. The wide adaptability of Marxist tactics to diverse national conditions may allow of political success for Communism in various countries as it did temporarily in Spain or China. But it is difficult to see how even such successes could result in an expansion of the Soviet system itself much beyond its present boundaries, plus, maybe, some adjacent territories whose national and historical conditions might further such expansion.<sup>182</sup> The U.S.S.R. itself might feel the specific national character of its great experiment endangered if it had to include partners whose cultural traditions were of a similar weight to the Russian, be the level of the industrial development of these prospective partners much lower (as in the case of China) or higher (as in the case of a Communist Germany) than in the present U.S.S.R.

The only situation in which the Soviet system as an outcome of a Communist monopoly of power could be realized in very different countries would be if a policy of anti-revolutionary intervention should be undertaken by the Anglo-Saxon Powers, or by other states co-operating with them. In such a situation where the mere need for self-preservation of new revolutionary states, and for the international security of the U.S.S.R. herself, would dictate Socialist policy, the development of each national unit—including the U.S.S.R.—could only be given secondary consideration. But it would be wrong in such a case to insist that the expansion was due to an expansionist policy in the Soviet system. Of course, it may be claimed that the continued existence of a Socialist system side by side with capitalist countries is incompatible with the existence and development of the latter. From such a point of view it may be regarded as a task of an eventual federation of the Western Powers to create homogeneity all over the world, if necessary by intervention.<sup>183</sup> Should such a policy prevail, intervention, and maybe also homogeneity all over the world, would come in due course—the question is only *what kind of homogeneity*. Those who use arguments of the above kind do not seem convinced that the social and political

<sup>182</sup>See Keeton-Schlesinger, *Russia and her Western Neighbours* London, 1942

<sup>183</sup>See the article of Clyde Eagleton in *The New Commonwealth Quarterly*, September 1939, p. 128

system they stand for can successfully stand peaceful competition with another for long. The Soviet believes its own system can. Otherwise all the developments discussed in the fifth chapter of this book would be quite inexplicable.

And so to the final question arising from our study: which of the concrete developments of Soviet ideology are likely to be of a permanent character, and which seem merely ephemeral? This question has been at least partly answered already. Essential features of Stalinist Russia can be brought within the framework of orthodox Marxism: this seems to suggest an interpretation of the latter as more than a transitional stage, to be shed bit by bit—although there is no reason to suppose that there will be no further shedding of parts of the classical theory. Certainly in many cases where the Russian Communists believe they have dropped some conception such as the 'withering away of the state' merely temporarily, it may prove that in fact the emergence of such theories at a certain stage of the revolutionary development rather than their disappearance was a passing phenomenon. In other cases, where the modifications of original Bolshevik theory and practice were due to national danger, there is no reason to expect that sacrifices made merely in order to meet such threats are of a more than temporary character. But all modifications of the original Marxist theories due to the typical national characteristics of the Soviet peoples may be considered as definitive: they determine the form in which the experience of the revolutionary period has been able to become a constituent element of the national outlook.

I know that orthodox Marxist theory, and more especially Bolshevik theory, regards the national character itself as a highly transitory thing, and considers the freedom of development granted to the various national cultures within the U.S.S.R. as a means to their more rapid and painless amalgamation.<sup>124</sup> But even if this should prove to be true the new, amalgamated, nationality would still be formed by such experiences that the united peoples, as distinct from others, would have shared, and this would hold true even if other nations should at a later stage turn Socialist by way of other experiences. Nationalism for itself, whatever the breadth of the community claiming national allegiance, is bound to be strengthened by a great social transition achieved through joint efforts, at a certain time, in a particular part of the world. Thus, the formation of a new Soviet nationality is bound to result from the developments we have studied. It is hardly necessary to emphasize that nationalism need not necessarily imply certain aggressive forms often associated with it today: peaceful competition may, in a changed society, prove as good a way of self assertion as periodical bloody wars.

Nationalism, as a means of handing on historical experiences to other generations, may under varying conditions, have different implications. Among members of other nationalities, having their social and political

<sup>124</sup>For the same point of view as expressed by non Marxists, see *Nationalism*, published by the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1939.

positions and their creeds, etc., at variance, there is strong disagreement as to *what* exactly constitutes the 'national character' except that it is something to be emphasized and cherished if necessary to be defended. In consequence, the French (and also the pre-1917 Russians) of various political creeds disagree as to what is true nationalism, and what is treason. So do Hitlerite and democratic Germans. The most characteristic element in Soviet nationalism is that its meaning is identical for any member of the given nation—although among patriotic Soviet people there are marked differences for example in their cultural or religious outlook. But they know what they, *qua* Soviet nationals have in common. The forging of this truly national unity through the achievements of the Revolution is an essential feature, and a primary source of strength of present-day Russia. It is the real strength of Soviet ideology and an acknowledged aim of its development.

So the U S S R will contribute its part in shaping human history. No one can say today whether it will remain the only form in which Marxism, as a political system will exercise its influence on future developments. Even if it should remain so this influence will range among the most successful that political ideologies have exercised at any time. But even assuming some other successful attempts at realizing Marxist principles, it is quite clear that none of these realizations would fully cover the original ideological conceptions. The latter would recede into the background, whither primitive Christianity, behind its various denominational realizations, has also receded. Should Marxism prove a highly successful ideology the time may come when reformers of the incomplete realizations will attempt a return to its original purity according to their own conceptions of it.

Maybe among its contributions to human progress Marxism will provide some help in bringing about the social conditions necessary for that federation of mankind which all progressive men and women, in all camps, strive for as the only alternative to periodical butcheries. And even in that case, even if it is highly successful in making internationalism a living reality, it will not abolish the importance of nationality as a great driving force of mankind. This is one of the most important lessons to be drawn from the Russian experience.

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